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Thesis

FUNCTIONAL PUNCTUATION IN SECONDARY-SCHOOL ENGLISH

Submitted by

Ruth Elizabeth Baker  
(A.B., Boston University, 1932)

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education

1945

First Reader: Roy O. Billett, Professor of Education  
Second Reader: J. Wendell Yeo, Associate Professor of Education  
Third Reader: Worcester Warren, Associate Professor of Education

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CHAPTER I  
PRESENT STATUS OF PUNCTUATION IN  
SECONDARY-SCHOOL ENGLISH

The Problem and the Method Used to Solve It

The problem stated.-- The purpose of this paper is to present a study to determine what punctuation is really functional in secondary-school English and to show how such punctuation may be presented in a functional way.

The source of the problem.-- The writer has recently been engaged in the study of the Reorganization of Secondary Curricula as it is presented by Dr. Roy O. Billett in Boston University School of Education. During his discussion of the reorganized English curriculum, Dr. Billett emphasized that one of the problems facing any local English staff is to determine how grammar, spelling, handwriting, and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression may be made functional. The writer has been inspired to make a study of the problem in order to prepare herself to make specific, constructive changes in the course of study she is now engaged in teaching. If from this study other teachers in the field of English instruction gain any assistance, however small, which may be of use to them as they reorganize the English courses in their school



systems, the writer will feel that the time spent on the problem will not have been entirely wasted.

The term "functional" defined.-- Because the term "functional" will be used frequently throughout this study, a definition of the term is necessary at the outset in order that there may be no misconception or misunderstanding. Billett<sup>1/</sup> defines the term as follows:

An overwhelming majority of leaders in the field of secondary-school English instruction agree that grammar and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression should be functional or instrumental. They mean by this that the grammar and mechanics of form, usage, and expression which pupils learn should be learned as the pupils develop a need for them in oral and written expression. For two reasons, considerable vagueness exists as to just what grammar and mechanics of form, usage, and expression are really functional. The first reason has to do with standards: standards as to what constitutes good English expression in general, and standards as to the level and area of development in English expression which validly may be expected of pupils in each grade. The second reason inheres in a general oversight of the fact that, in the very nature of things, the functionality of the elements of grammar and of the mechanics of form, usage, and expression is a highly individual matter, constantly varying from one pupil to another at all grade and chronological levels.

Emphasis on punctuation.-- This study will not attempt to treat of all the phases of the problem as stated by Billett: namely, grammar, spelling, handwriting, and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression. Rather it will confine itself to

1/Roy O. Billett, Fundamentals of Secondary-School Teaching with Emphasis on the Unit Method, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1940, p. 208.



the subject of punctuation. It would seem that a study to determine how to make functional one of the mechanics of expression might result in findings or in a general method of procedure that could be applied to the teaching of other aspects of oral and written expression. The writer has chosen to investigate punctuation because a need for making that subject functional has arisen in her classroom.

Analysis of pertinent literature.-- In attempting to arrive at a solution to the problem the writer will first consult specialists in the field of English instruction to discover whether there is any evidence of their dissatisfaction with the traditional English course as it deals with the teaching of punctuation. If testimony that the old methods have failed to make punctuation functional is discovered, it will be offered as further evidence of the need for a new method of teaching punctuation.

Establishment of standards.-- Before a method can be devised for making punctuation functional it is necessary to determine what standards are to be set. Billett<sup>1/</sup> states:

As a first step toward establishing a local program of instruction in functional or instrumental grammar and mechanics of form, usage, and expression, it would seem necessary for the local faculty to establish what it regards as acceptable, general standards for good English....

The next step would seem to be the establishment of acceptable grade standards revealing the

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1/Ibid., pp. 208-209.

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amount of development expected of the typical pupil in each year. These standards should be, of course, very specific. They could not be established, even with approximate validity, without the results of extensive analysis in each of the secondary-school grades of the pupils' oral and written efforts at expression in their English classes, and in their other classes and environments. Such analyses have been made in many school systems (see for example the Los Angeles course of study in junior-high-school English) and are becoming increasingly frequent in the literature dealing with instruction in secondary-school English. To a given school system, however, studies made outside the system are of value only as a basis of comparison, and are in no way a substitute for local studies of a similar nature. These analyses and comparative studies will enable the local staff to determine (1) the errors which pupils commonly make at each grade level, and those which they might reasonably be expected not to make if instruction in grammar and in the mechanics of form, usage, and expression were really functional; and (2) the increased facility in accurate oral and written expression which might reasonably be expected of pupils in each grade provided certain handicaps and shortcomings imposed by a lack of knowledge and skill in the realm of grammar and of mechanics of form, usage, and expression were removed. Such studies will not only yield the central tendencies which are to become grade standards; they will reveal the amount of variation among individual pupils on either side of the central tendency, and thus show the amount of differentiation in such instruction which local teachers of English should be prepared to make at each grade level.

In order to determine what marks of punctuation are necessary to the secondary-school pupil, the writer will consult authorities in the field and present her findings as a basis for establishing grade standards.

Description of a functional method.-- After the standards of punctuation have been determined, the writer, closely





following the suggestions made by Billett will describe a functional method of teaching punctuation which will be remedial in character. Billett's statement is as follows: <sup>1/</sup>

Next it would seem to be the desirable and practical procedure to plan a unit assignment for each common error and shortcoming so that the different needs of different pupils might be met simultaneously with a minimum of personal attention and time of the teacher. Only in this way could the teacher hope to give each pupil the kind of help which he needs when he needs it. This statement would seem to hold in all schools whether or not it is locally feasible to create special classes for pupils showing serious deficiencies in oral and written expression. Even in special classes such assignments would enable the teacher to deal simultaneously with many different kinds of errors and shortcomings; and judiciously used, such assignments would make it as a rule unnecessary to remove pupils from the regular classes for such instruction.

In school systems where provisions to teach grammar and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression in a truly functional way have been practically nonexistent at both the elementary and secondary-school levels, the first efforts to establish such a program will be far more largely remedial in nature than they will be after the program has been actually under way for a few years. The problem will also be more serious in school systems where large proportions of the enrollment come from homes where a foreign language is spoken; and even if flexible standards are established, the problem of the pupil of low general mental ability will be greater than the problem of the pupil of high general mental ability. It is an encouraging fact that pupils who are normal and above in general mental ability will usually be able to acquire with ease the elements of grammar and of the mechanics of form, usage, and expression whenever they see the need to convey their ideas to others orally or in writing. Diagnostic tests in composition administered to each pupil upon entrance to the secondary school would be of great help in setting up a local program of instruction in functional or instrumental

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<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., pp. 209-210.



grammar and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression; and such tests are of course given in many schools.

Practice exercises.-- In conclusion the writer will offer sample exercises and practice sheets in punctuation which she has used in her classrooms in an attempt to make punctuation functional.

### Evidence That Specialists in English Are Aware of Some Aspects of the Problem

Analysis of pertinent literature.-- An examination of pertinent literature reveals that specialists in English instruction are aware of the existence of the problem, if not of its nature and the method of solving it. Some have made studies that have produced evidence of the need for making punctuation functional; some have devised and experimented with teaching methods and materials in an attempt to improve punctuation skills in secondary-school pupils. At this time it seems advisable to make a survey of some of these studies and experiments in order to avail ourselves of the findings and conclusions of specialists.

William Asker.-- Dissatisfied with traditional methods,  
William Asker<sup>1/</sup> points out that schoolmen formerly believed that a knowledge of formal grammar was necessary to the correct use of the English language. Now, he says, formal grammar is in

<sup>1/</sup>William Asker, "Does Knowledge of Formal Grammar Function?" School and Society (January, 1923), 17:109-111.





some systems entirely abolished because of the newer theory that correctness comes from habit, not from applying memorized rules. He attempts to "throw some light on the question Does Knowledge of Formal Grammar Function<sup>1/</sup> by a statistical comparison between knowledge of certain phases of formal grammar, ability to judge the correctness of a sentence, and the ability to use English as revealed through composition."<sup>1/</sup>

He describes an experiment given to 295 freshmen in the University of Washington. Tests were given which revealed that between grammatical knowledge as revealed through English tests and ability to judge correctness of sentences, as shown by scores on a grammatical scale, there is only a small correlation, a Pearson coefficient of 0.23. Knowledge of formal grammar, Asker concluded, functions here very little. Although further study revealed that the coefficient between grammatical knowledge and ability in composition is higher (0.37), Mr. Asker<sup>2/</sup> points out that formal grammar is not the only factor determining ability in English composition.

The coefficient of correlation between ability in English composition and general ability as shown by the composite grades in all subjects is 0.63. This shows that ability to write English composition depends to a considerably higher degree upon general ability than upon a knowledge of formal grammar.... it follows that the importance of formal grammar for

<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., p. 111.





English composition is far less than would be indicated by the coefficient of correlation between them....

The facts show, then, that knowledge of formal grammar influences ability....in English composition only to a negligible degree....as the number of cases involved [295] is large enough to be a fair representation of conditions in general. We may therefore be justified in the conclusion that time spent upon formal grammar in the elementary school is wasted as far as the majority of students is concerned, and that teachers of English composition must seek some other reason for the alleged generally poor ability in their subject than the neglect of formal grammar in the grade school.

1/  
Rachel Salisbury.-- Salisbury maintains that punctuation should be taught according to the meaning philosophy rather than the grammar philosophy. She writes: 2/

It is about time that the American English teacher began to tell his students the truth about punctuation. For decade after decade he has taught them that punctuation depends upon grammar....The nineteenth century never questioned the assumption that punctuation was the handmaiden of grammar.... There is most certainly a time and a place for the teaching of grammar to those young people in our schools....I wish here merely to point out the apparent wastefulness and the faulty psychology of continuing to teach the average American child to punctuate according to grammar.

For the truth of the matter is that punctuation is a reading device--pure and simple. It serves the same purpose in reading that pauses and voice inflections do in speaking. It marks the joints in the

1/Dr. Salisbury is author of high-school and college textbooks, Making Sense, Better Work Habits, and Better Composition. With J. P. Leonard she is coauthor of Thinking in English, Book One and Book Two, Considering the Meaning, and Language for Use.

2/Rachel Salisbury, "Psychology of Punctuation," English Journal (December, 1939), 23:796-797.



thought; it does the stopping and turning and splicing that keep the reader following comfortably and intelligently along the trail of the writer's thought.

Let us redefine punctuation as the art of using marks to help the reader to see, with some speed and accuracy, the relations among written ideas. This definition immediately points our inquiry into the field of thinking instead of into the categories of grammar.

Dr. Salisbury maintains that there are only three relations among ideas; namely, equality, dependence, and independence. Punctuation marks exist to make clear these three relationships. Only three steps are important in the easy transmission of ideas. First, the pupil must know what he wishes to say. Second, he must realize the existence of the three relations among ideas. Last, he must associate the proper marks with each relation. The rules which will make clear these relationships are as follows:<sup>1/</sup>

1. Separate sentences from each other by a period. (Use a question mark or an exclamation point if the meaning requires it.)

2. a. Use a comma or the word "and" to connect items that are working together in lists of two or more things.

- b. If two statements are to be combined in one sentence, use both the comma and the word "and" (,and) to prevent possible misreading. ("But," "yet," "or," or "nor" may take the place of "and" if the meaning requires it.)

3. Use a comma, or a pair of commas, to warn the reader of a turn in the thought.

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<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 797.



Dr. Salisbury suggests <sup>1/</sup> that

Defining punctuation as a function of meaning rather than a function of grammar does not, of course, do away with the frequent coincidences between joints in grammar and joints in thought. It merely simplifies the student's problem....by giving him three principles of action instead of the score that even the average modern text for high-school pupils presents.

In "examining some popular fallacies and prejudices" Dr. Salisbury disproves the belief that punctuation is determined by grammar. <sup>2/</sup>

In the following sentences the punctuation certainly determines the grammar.

1. Don't take that collar off Peter.
2. Don't take that collar off, Peter.

In the first sentence Peter, who is probably the dog, is the object of the preposition "off." In the second sentence the comma before "Peter" changes him in one neat operation from a dog to a person by making him a noun of address. The comma has changed the meaning and the meaning has changed the grammar. This illustration shows the difference between the grammatical and the psychological approaches to punctuating. The former asks, "What should I do according to grammar?" The latter asks, "What do I wish to do to show my meaning?" Here are four other examples of the need of a meaning approach to the problems of punctuation.

3. Your mother asked me not to call you dear.
4. Johnson says Reynolds is the greatest living actor.
5. We are going to eat John before we go another step.
6. I hadn't heard that Gordon was the guard on duty that night. (four possible interpretations)

1/Ibid., p. 798.

2/Ibid., p. 799 ff.





The writer's meaning will determine the mark and the mark will fix the grammar.

Other situations are offered by Salisbury as evidence that meaning determines the punctuation of a sentence. She writes:

Take the rule for the introductory adverbial clauses. Any student who omits the comma after "continues" in sentence 7 below would be told by a patient, grammar-minded teacher that he should have put it there because the initial expression is an introductory adverbial clause. The meaning-minded teacher would point out that the joint in the thought after a typical "if" clause is usually weak; the reader is asking, "Where does this clause end and the real statement begin?" He likes to have the writer tell him with a comma. Note these pairs of sentences:

7. If this hot weather continues, there will be no corn crop.
8. There will be no corn crop if this hot weather continues.
9. When Percy turns around, notice his tie.
10. Notice Percy's tie when he turns around.

When the "if-clause" follows the main clause there is no problem for the reader. The word "if" by its very meaning tells him that the main clause is ended and a modifier is beginning. The grammar of the two sentences is identical; yet the reader of sentences seven and nine desires the comfort of that warning comma. Without it he is constantly afraid of finding himself in some such predicament as the following:

11. If you would put the window up the chimney wouldn't smoke.
12. Since Beatrice found it so hard to work with Janet turned the menu over to Maxine.
13. If you want to see Mr. Bunkers about a new wastebasket.

....In many cases, of course, the reader could not possibly make a mistake.





Later Dr. Salisbury <sup>1/</sup> writes:

In the same dogmatic fashion we have given grammar the credit for putting a comma to work between the parts of a compound sentence. It isn't the grammar that requires the comma; it is the adhesive quality of the word "and." "And" is a born joiner....Whenever we see or hear two things joined by "and" we immediately feel the attraction between them, as in "bread and butter," "spring and summer," "black and white." It is this natural attraction in meaning between the two words on either side of "and" which makes it necessary to use a comma before the "and" that joins the main clauses. If the writer neglects this, the reader sometimes has difficulty in following the meaning without mishap.

21. Water lilies were floating in the spring and summer bunchberries reddened the overhanging knoll.
22. Ward left the engine running and jumping into the ditch he pulled the half-drowned pup out of the muddy water.

To avoid such mental accidents, readers and writers have an agreement that a double signal (,and) is to be used at the junction between two statements paired within the limits of a single sentence. It is the danger to the meaning, not the niceness of grammatical distinction, that makes the agreement necessary.

Maintaining that commas never separate but always connect and that the misconception that commas separate is responsible for student errors in punctuating a series, Dr. Salisbury <sup>2/</sup> states:

The meaning-minded teacher uses the word "separate" only in reference to sentence endings. If a reader is to follow meanings from sentence to sentence with speed and accuracy, those sentences must be unmistakably separated from each other by the use of a familiar compound signal--the period that ends

1/Ibid., p. 801.

2/Ibid., p. 804.



one sentence and the capital letter that starts the next....No reader can tolerate a writer who, through careless failure to separate sentences, leads him to participate in such mental collisions as these:

29. Then the storm broke the windows and doors rattled violently.
30. The Indian Toti went off by himself to eat the rattlesnakes and the lizards squirming uneasily in the fragile box at my elbow rather spoiled my appetite.
31. Diggs went back to the plane to refuel the radio operator, who had gone after coffee, rejoined him in a few minutes.

Dr. Salisbury points out,<sup>1/</sup> to punctuate the above sentences

pupils need to learn not the grammar of the compound sentence but only the simple principle of separation. Sentence sense must precede any writing....the writer's first task is to make the sentence say what he wants it to say and then punctuate....Putting meaning above grammar leaves the burden of proof for any punctuation mark squarely up to the writer....If the writer wants the modifier to be considered merely explanatory or incidentally, if it seems momentarily to interrupt the smooth flow of his sentence, he sets it off with commas, thus warning the reader of the turn away from or onto the path of the main statement. Neither the writer nor the reader needs to struggle with the abstractions represented by "restrictive" and "non-restrictive."

As a substitute for the grammar approach Dr. Salisbury offers a meaning, or psychological, approach on the grounds that "It builds good readers as well as good writers. Freed of the bewildering confusion of grammatical terminology the young pupil can sit down to a writing job and give his full attention to what he has to say. He will be writing, not to

1/Ibid., pp. 804-805.





show his grammatical dexterity but to communicate ideas."

Stormzand and O'Shea.--<sup>1/</sup> In discussing punctuation errors, Stormzand and O'Shea express a theory typical of what Dr. Salisbury had deprecated: "Violations of sentence completeness often hinge on the lack of clear understanding of the principal and dependent clause distinctions. Important rules of punctuation hinge on both the compound and complex sentence structures."

Matthew H. Willing.-- A study was made by Willing<sup>2/</sup> "to determine the validities of two procedures for diagnosing the weaknesses of individual high school pupils in the formal elements of written composition." Willing approached the solution by (1) the error analysis of typical schoolroom themes and (2) the error analysis of performance in typical proof-reading and error-recognition tests. Willing writes:

The steps recognized in the treatment of the problem are as follows:

1. The selection of the pupils to be subjects of the investigation.
2. The securing of typical themes and other samples of school writing from these pupils.
3. The giving and scoring of proof-reading and error-recognition tests.
4. The error analysis of the pupils' compositions in accordance with a prepared error guide.

<sup>1/</sup>M. J. Stormzand and M. V. O'Shea, How Much English Grammar? Warwick and York, Baltimore, 1924, p. 29.

<sup>2/</sup>M. H. Willing, Valid Diagnosis in High School Composition, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 230, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1926, p. 1.





5. The building of a reliable criterion out of pupils' composition.
6. The error analysis of the formal tests and of the pupils' performances in them.
7. The correlating of pupil scores in the formal tests with their error scores in the composition criterion.
8. The correlating of pupil error scores in single themes with their error scores in the composition criterion.
9. Conclusions.

<sup>1/</sup>Willing believed that "the problem is of chief importance in its relation to individually adjusted instruction in the mechanics of English at the high school level." He writes that for the teacher to care for the needs of individual pupils she must find out his needs in ways that are valid and reliable and he declares his purpose to measure the error scores in formal tests and single themes against the criterion of the "error score"<sup>2/</sup> of a reliable sampling of a pupil's first draft school-room writing."

Furthermore Willing suggests:

Likewise, it seems important....to find out how well a single theme correlates in error score with a reliable composition criterion. Can a teacher ascertain validly from a single original or reproduction theme just what instruction or remedial attention each of her pupils needs? To contribute to the answering of such a question and the others expressed or implied above is the principal object of the present research.

When Willing consulted the literature of the field he came to certain conclusions:

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1/Ibid., p. 2.

2/Ibid., p. 2.



....(1) there is no authoritative literature on the question of the validity of formal test scores as against an actual composition criterion....

(2) the makers of formal tests do not assert that the tests show exactly what the pupils will do in their writing, but much emphasis is laid on diagnostic values....(3) as to whether the detailed or analyzed results on formal tests are precisely predictive of accuracy in composition, the general opinion is probably much like that expressed by Ashbaugh<sup>1</sup> when he says:

"It is true that the ability to recognize incorrect language forms and to correct them does not guarantee that the child will use the correct forms in either his oral or written language. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that whenever the child cannot or does not recognize incorrect forms when presented to him for discriminating effort, he is not likely to use the correct form when his focus of attention is upon the general thought, as in the case of oral or written composition."

It is in this faith that instruction, both individual and group, is very often based on test findings.

(4) The validity of the single theme as a diagnostic measure of composition seems not to have been questioned at all.

In general, Willing's procedure was as follows: Seventy pupils in grades eight and nine of the Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University, were chosen. These pupils were above average for their grade in language abilities, wrote easily, had an average I.Q. of 116.5, and came from homes where good English was spoken and where reading material was "plentiful and made use of."

Each pupil wrote eight compositions. "Three were original

<sup>1</sup>/E. J. Ashbaugh, "Measurement of Language," Journal of Educational Research (June, 1921), 4:39 (quoted by Willing, p. 4).



themes <sup>1/</sup> and two were reproductions, all written expressly for the investigator. The other three were, respectively, a book review, a written lesson in social studies or history, and a written lesson in science."

"Sixteen formal tests were given.... <sup>2/</sup> These tests differ as to (1) nature of requirement, (2) kind of material, (3) complexity of material, and (4) comprehensiveness."

An error guide, "the result of an evolutionary process extending over perhaps ten or more years," was used to check and score the compositions. Every effort was made to guarantee the reliability of the error checking. In scoring the

....total error scores per hundred words were recorded for all papers on each of the first five subjects....

The other three sets of papers were checked.... merely through those sections selected for the composition criterion approximately 150 words in each case....

Two other methods of scoring were tried: one in which different kinds of error were counted only once each in making up the total, and one in which this "different error" score was added to the total error score. Correlations between the scores ran high, .90 and above.

As we have seen, Willing set up as a criterion 1,200 words of composition. When the errors were tabulated, he discovered <sup>3/</sup> that there were "10,489 errors counted in the criterion, of which 2,069, or 20 per cent, were in spelling; 996, or 9 per

1/Willing, op. cit., p. 7.

2/Ibid., p. 8.

3/Ibid., pp. 17-18.





cent, in capitalization; 4,357, or 42 per cent, in punctuation; 329, or 3 per cent, in grammar; 2,196, or 21 per cent, in sentence structure; 552, or 5 per cent, in word usage." Evidence of the reliability of the criterion is offered by Willing in his study;<sup>1/</sup> in addition evidence of test reliabilities and validities is offered.<sup>2/</sup> It does not seem necessary at this time to give a detailed report of this evidence.

The major standardized tests administered and scored were Briggs Form, Alpha; Cross English, Form A; Pressey (Capitalization, Punctuation, Grammar, and Sentence Structure combined); and General Correction of Error. Willing offers in detail proof of the validities of the individual tests and of the compositions.<sup>3/</sup> For the purposes of the writer's study a statement of some of Willing's conclusions will suffice.<sup>4/</sup>

1. The comprehensive....tests....are reasonably good instruments for predicting the average number of formal errors that these pupils will make in 1,200 words of diversified, classroom-written composition on familiar subject matter....
5. In this study the tests seemed to be of very doubtful value in forecasting the specific kinds of error individual pupils would make in their writing....

1/Ibid., pp. 18-20.

2/Ibid., pp. 23-32.

3/Ibid., pp. 23-32.

4/Ibid., pp. 33-34.



7. In the case of the 70 pupils of this study, a knowledge of formal grammar proved to bear little relation to their composition accuracy.
8. Single themes, either original or reproductive, in total or category scores correlate much more highly with the composition criterion than do any of the formal tests. They are, however, too unreliable and limited in error range to be used for thorough-going diagnosis.
9. Accurate and detailed diagnosis of formal ability in written composition for pupils of this level is apparently impossible except by the exhausting analysis of extended amounts of composition.
10. Type of tests are much needed which will serve in some way to secure a reliable, comprehensive, and readily analyzable product of the natural writing reactions of individuals.

Willing continued his study to include an inquiry into the "interrelationships of the categories of error," "interrelationships of the formal tests," "relationships of general tests and I.Q. with formal tests." The writer is not reporting on these phases of the study, as they seem of less importance to the main problem of her thesis.

Practical implications of his study were set forth by  
 Willing: <sup>1/</sup>

At the present time there is no satisfactory way, so far as the writer is aware, for a high school teacher meeting from a hundred to a hundred fifty new pupils at the beginning of a semester to find out in a week or two just what instruction each of these pupils needs to improve his writing in any specific way during the few weeks that he remains under her

1/Ibid., p. 53.



teaching. She should have tests that are very valid with respect to even specific errors, or she should employ a new technique of composition analysis. The last she is not likely to be able to do. But better diagnostic tests may be developed in at least two ways. One is by inventing and discovering test stimuli that will produce typical or habitual composition reactions....The other way to secure valid tests.... is to combine test exercises of different types in the measurement of rather limited groupings of closely related errors....And when devices that are truly diagnostic have been secured, the ideas entering into their construction are very likely to prove exactly the ideas needed in building effective practice and remedial materials to apply in teaching. In the end, the use of such tests and exercises should result in a reduction of the current preoccupation of teachers and pupils with materials and drill activities of doubtful validity and meager effect, and should thus release time and energy for attention to other matters in written composition which are much more worth while.

Edith E. Shepherd.-- Leonard<sup>1/</sup> reports that Miss Shepherd carried on an experiment with seventh-grade pupils at the University of Chicago High School to determine the effectiveness of a group method of teaching punctuation. Her method consisted of stating and illustrating the principle violated in a specific error, of giving assimilative exercises in using the principle, of administering teaching tests, and of assigning written compositions for actual practice. After she had determined the percentage of accuracy for each child, she concluded that such a group method was not effective except in a few cases.

Later Miss Shepherd carried on an "experiment"<sup>2/</sup> to determine

<sup>1/</sup>John Paul Leonard, The Use of Practice Exercises in the Teaching of Punctuation and Capitalization, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 372, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1930, p. 3.

<sup>2/</sup>Edith E. Shepherd, "An Experiment in Teaching English Usage to Junior High School Pupils," School Review (November, 1925), 33:675.





the most effective technique for teaching essential matters of good English usage to junior high school pupils so as to establish in them right habits and attitudes toward correctness in speaking and writing."

The previous study had revealed to Miss Shepherd that "The major fault of [group] teaching appeared to consist in the failure to establish in the pupils the right attitudes of responsibility rather than in the failure to implant clear understanding and ability to use the facts and principles learned."<sup>1/</sup>

In the new experiment Miss Shepherd aimed to create

conditions which would emphasize (1) the pupil's own need for the instruction given, (2) his personal responsibility for using in all written work the principles and the facts learned in the English course, and (3) the facts that all written work, whether in science, or geography, or art, or English, is equally valid evidence of his need for instruction in usage and of his mastery of the principles studied.

In the experiment Miss Shepherd adhered completely to individualization. This was achieved by planning a usage course for each pupil based on the errors in usage which he made in written work prepared for science and geography. Twenty-eight errors of common usage were used as a standard for the class. The errors of the individual were charted and this chart served as a record sheet on which the

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<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 675.



achievement and progress of the pupil was kept.

When a pupil had written a paper for geography or science, the English teacher corrected it, marking in the margins the lessons needed to be studied. The pupil listed on his own record sheet the lessons he must study. The specific errors were checked by the teacher, and the pupil was responsible for first correcting any errors which had been due to carelessness. If there were errors which he could not find or could not correct, he asked the teacher for help.

Mimeographed sheets explaining the usage and providing for the application of it were used in later class periods. They were simple enough to be done without the teacher's help. Miss Shepherd <sup>1/</sup> writes:

....Theoretically, during a given period all pupils in the class might be studying different lessons. Generally, however, it was possible to gather together a group of pupils all of whom had the same lesson to study at the same time. They were handled together in group discussion while the other worked alone, each doing the easiest lesson in his list.

Later in the period the group were set to work while the instructor gave help to the pupils who were working alone. Testing was carried on to check the progress of the pupils. Those who had few errors and corrected them easily were allowed to employ their time in other activities related to the English course.

1/Ibid., p. 679.

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Papers from other courses were used as practice materials, and often there was a check to see whether usages mastered at one date were correct in papers written at a later date. This experiment was carried on for a year with continual checks and penalties. A pupil committing an error supposedly mastered long before was required to re-study the usage.

Miss Shepherd stresses: <sup>1/</sup>

....Everything was done, concretely, which would aid in establishing the right attitude and habits, but very little was said about the matter abstractly. Pupils were not exhorted to improve their written work, but every influence was brought to bear to make them accept the responsibility for doing so.

Standardized tests were administered to measure the attainment of these pupils. Miss Shepherd describes her procedure as follows: <sup>2/</sup>

The Starch Punctuation Scale A was one of three tests given to measure the attainment of these pupils as compared with the attainment of other pupils of equal school experience. The test was given to 65 seventh-grade pupils in June, 1924. The results were as follows: forty-six pupils, or 71 per cent, scored higher than the standard for Grade VIII, nine pupils, or 14 per cent, made scores equal to the standard for Grade VIII; ten pupils, or 15 per cent, scored below the standard for Grade VII. Not only did nearly three-fourths of the pupils score higher than the standard for pupils who have had one more year of school experience than these pupils, but thirty-three, or 51 per cent, made scores higher than the

1/Ibid., p. 681.

2/Ibid., pp. 681-682.





standard for Grade XII. Of the nineteen pupils who scored at or below the level for the seventh grade, four were recognized problem cases in language arts subjects; five others were lesson-learners according to other evidence.

In concluding her report Miss Shepherd writes:

It seems fair to conclude from the evidence of these tests that pupils of the seventh grade who have attained fair ability to express their ideas are able to profit to a reasonable degree by definite instruction in matters of usage. They can attain a level of accuracy in written work satisfactory for the grade, as measured by tests supported by teacher's judgments and by tests which have been standardized for the grade.

Further investigation by Shepherd.--<sup>1/</sup> After Shepherd had found evidence that it is possible to establish a satisfactory knowledge of usage principles in junior high school pupils, she made further studies to determine the "extent to which it is possible to influence pupil attitudes."

Two types of evidence were discovered by Shepherd. The first type, she writes, consists of chance remarks, questions directed to the teacher at other times than during the class period, and spontaneous self-correction.

The other type is more objective: (1) a comparative study<sup>2/</sup> was made "of the accuracy of punctuation in papers written in a science class and of the accuracy of punctuation in papers written in the English class after punctuation had been taught,

<sup>1/</sup>Edith E. Shepherd, "The Attitude of Junior High School Pupils Toward English Usage," School Review (October, 1926), 34:574-586.

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., p. 577.



and (3) of the results of a comparison of both of these with the accuracy of punctuation in a paper written before the teaching."

The same usages and the same methods of scoring were used in all papers. Miss Shepherd reports: <sup>1/</sup>

The papers were scored as to (a) the number of opportunities to use punctuation, (b) the number of cases in which the pupil used punctuation correctly, (c) the number of cases in which he omitted punctuation, and (d) the number of cases in which he misused punctuation. These items were used to find a numerical expression which would represent the ratio of the number of cases in which the punctuation was correct to the total number of opportunities for punctuation. The formula used was  $\frac{b}{a}$  or, in cases of error of the d type not included in a,  $\frac{b-d}{a}$ . For example, pupil 793 had seventy-seven opportunities to use punctuation in his science paper. He used punctuation correctly in seventy-five cases, omitted punctuation in two cases, and used punctuation in four cases where punctuation was incorrect. Use of the formula gives  $\frac{75-4}{77} = .92$ .

Miss Shepherd comments that errors of the c type (omission of punctuation) are due considerably to carelessness whereas those of the d type show the right attitude but reveal <sup>2/</sup>ignorance.

In this connection it is worth while to report that forty-eight pupils, or 74 per cent of the group, made errors of the d type after studying punctuation. Among the lesson-learners, such errors occur almost entirely in papers written for the English instructor. Among the real learners, they occur with about equal frequency in papers written for English....the

<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., pp. 577-578.

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., pp. 578-579.



pupil who starts at a low level of accuracy in punctuation before instruction and punctuates his English paper with perfect accuracy after instruction but ignores many of the opportunities for punctuation in his science paper is a lesson learner. His performance is less satisfactory than that of the pupil who starts at the same level and uses punctuation correctly in only a part of the cases in his English paper but punctuates equally well or better (with a difference of six points or less between the score in science and the score in English) in his science paper. The second pupil has the right attitude; his learning transfers. Given time and teaching, he will learn to punctuate correctly. Unless his attitude is corrected, the first pupil will never do better in unsupervised writing than he has done in his science paper, and he will probably slip back to the level at which the instructor found him.

The following table compiled from Miss Shepherd's findings is of interest.

Table 1. Learning Types as Revealed by Punctuation Scores in Science and English Papers.<sup>a/</sup>

Accuracy Before Instruction	Accuracy After Instruction	
	Science	English
A. 1. Pupils whose learning shows almost complete transfer		
11	100	100
93	94	97
55	95	92
72	92	92
33	90	92
29	90	88
10	87	88
11	85	86
0	88	91
12	96	91
46	85	88
0	85	90
62	95	88

<sup>a/</sup>Adapted from Shepherd, pp. 580-581.





Table 1. (cont.)

Accuracy Before Instruction	Accuracy After Instruction	
	Science	English
A. 2. Pupils who have learned less but show practically complete transfer.		
33	83	86
41	81	77
50	77	81
11	77	70
25	93	80
6	86	70
10	70	65
11	61	67
14	77	66
0	67	50
28	67	50
28	80	61
41	76	54
17	52	46
20	67	43
15	54	40
B. Lesson learners: learning does not transfer satisfactorily		
1. Slight tendency toward less learning and large amount of true learning.		
25	82	94
76	82	94
32	83	91
2. Pupils who are dominated by the lesson-learning attitude who punctuate with 30 or more points greater accuracy in English than in science.		
10	50	80
36	50	88
0	46	80
17	50	80
20	47	78
6	31	67
22	37	80
0	27	100
25	38	87



Table 1. (concluded)

Accuracy Before Instruction	Accuracy After Instruction	
	Science	English
C. Problem Cases: Pupils almost non-learners or whose learning shows unexplainable variations in transfer.		
50	51	43
0	50	20
14	100	25
22	28	17
0	14	14
0	33	11
33	14	33
37	24	25
0	0	33
22	33	25
0	31	20

In order to evaluate the success of individualized technique employed with these pupils as compared with the group instruction of the previous year, Miss Shepherd summarized the results for both phases of the experiment:

In the case of Groups A and C this table shows about the same percentage of pupils in 1924 as in 1923. The greatest difference is found in the case of Group B<sub>2</sub>, pupils in whom the lesson-learning attitude is still dominant. This group has been reduced from 43 per cent to 17 per cent. There is considerable difference in the case of Group B also, pupils in whom the lesson-learning attitude seems to be giving way to real learning. On the whole, the attitude seems to be better in 1924 than in 1923, Groups A and B enrolling 66 per cent of the class in 1924 as compared with 47 per cent in 1923.



Table 2. Results of Instruction in 1923 and 1924.<sup>a/</sup>

	1923		1924	
	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils
A. Real learning.....	12	40	29	45
B1. Some lesson-learning; Much real learning..	2	7	14	21
B2. Lesson-learning dominant.....	13	43	11	17
C. Problem cases.....	3	10	11	17
Total.....	30	100	65	100

<sup>a/</sup>Ibid., p. 584.

It seems fair to conclude that individualization of instruction, emphasis on pupil responsibility, cooperation of the various departments in holding pupils to good standards of usage, and above all, more refined recognition of the nature of the objectives all important factors in establishing desirable attitudes on the part of pupils toward matters of English usage.

<sup>1/</sup>Segel and Barr.-- In May, 1926, Segel and Barr carried on an investigation into the relation of achievement in formal grammar to achievement in applied grammar. Tests in formal and applied grammar were given to more than one thousand sophomores and juniors in the senior high school at Long Beach. They report:

<sup>1/</sup>David Segel and Nora Barr, "Relation of Achievement in Formal Grammar to Achievement in Applied Grammar," Journal of Educational Research (December, 1926), 14:401-402.





Results were correlated for 304 cases. Correlation was also found between the two tests with mental ability constant as judges by the scores on the Terman Group Intelligence Test....There was a correlation of 0.65 between tests and marks given by English teachers.

Data obtained by Segel and Barr was as follows:

Correlation of formal grammar with applied grammar.	0.56
Correlation of formal grammar with applied when intelligence is constant.	0.48
Correlation of formal grammar with intelligence.	0.40
Correlation of applied grammar with intelligence.	0.40
Reliability coefficient of formal grammar test.	0.94
Reliability coefficient of applied grammar test.	0.84

The average English grades were tabulated thus:

Table 3. Average English Grades as Discovered by Segel and Barr.<sup>a/</sup>

Test	Sophomore	Sophomore	Junior
Formal Grammar.....	74.4	72.4	67.7
Applied Grammar.....	75.7	76.0	80.0

<sup>a/</sup>Ibid., p. 402.



As a result of this study the investigators concluded that the application of the study to the value of teaching formal grammar is limited, yet they believe that there is no immediate transfer value as far as applied grammar is concerned.

John Paul Leonard.-- Leonard stated <sup>1/</sup> as the central problem of his study:

....to determine whether the use of practice exercises in the nature of proof-reading, error correction, and dictation practice materials improves pupils' ability to write compositions free from errors. The investigator also sought:

- (a) To study the effect of teaching by practice exercises on the accomplishment in achievement tests in punctuation and capitalization.
- (b) To determine the permanency of learning by practice exercises.
- (c) To determine the validity and reliability of a test to measure abilities in punctuation and capitalization.

The investigator believed that the problem was of great importance in attempting "to determine <sup>2/</sup> the effectiveness of certain established methods of teaching punctuation and capitalization to pupils of junior high school level." Leonard suggests that perhaps no one would challenge the efficacy of such exercises; then he points out that

1/John Paul Leonard, The Use of Practice Exercises in the Teaching of Capitalization and Punctuation, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 372, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1930, p. 1.

2/Ibid., p. 2.



the psychological process underlying proof-reading and error correction exercises is different from that involved in writing one's own sentences free from errors. When proof-reading one has a mind-set for errors, he looks only for errors, and seldom gets the unified context of the matter he is proof-reading. In original writing the prime purpose is to express one's thoughts clearly, and punctuation and capitalization are used only as tools to facilitate the understanding of the author's thoughts.<sup>1/</sup> To determine the effect of teaching one psychological process by the use of another becomes the problem of this study. In some respects, therefore, the investigator becomes a study in transfer.

The investigator chose ninety-eight pupils from the eighth and ninth grades of the Ethical Culture School, New York City. No attempt was made to select certain pupils, but their very attendance at that school indicated that they were to a degree selected. Leonard writes that raw scores on the Terman Group Intelligence test ranged from 89 to 196 for the eighth grade, and from 118 to 205 for the ninth grade. All the pupils were administered the following tests: Terman Group Intelligence Test, Form A; Pressey Diagnostic Tests in English Composition, Capitalization, and Punctuation, Form I; and Leonard Proof-Reading Test, Form A. The pupils were paired into experimental and control groups on the basis of a composite score from the four tests. The Pressey and Leonard tests were used to measure the pupils' abilities at the beginning of the experiment. When the operation of equating the groups had been completed, there remained only eighty-two

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<sup>1/</sup>Cf. Salisbury, p. 8 of this manuscript.





pupils from whom data was obtained.

At the conclusion of eleven teaching periods the following tests were administered: Pressey Diagnostic Tests in English Composition, Punctuation and Capitalization, Form I; Leonard Proof-Reading Test in Punctuation, Form A; an Error Correction Test consisting of an excerpt from Robert Louis Stevenson's Sire de Maletroit's Door; and a Dictation Test.

At the beginning of the experiment each pupil wrote five compositions in class, spending twenty minutes of each forty-five minute period on a different composition. The pupils had been told to use the best punctuation they knew, and they were given time to look over their work before the period closed.

At the end of the experiment the same procedure was followed. In all, 172,981 words were written.

In scoring the compositions an error guide was used, which consisted of the eleven rules of which Leonard says, <sup>1/</sup> "There is practically universal agreement on all of the eleven marks.... save one--the use of the comma before the 'and' in series.... he [the investigator] chose to teach the pupils to use the comma with the 'and' in series."

The following rules were used: <sup>2/</sup>

1. A period should be used at the end of declarative and imperative sentences.

<sup>1/</sup>Leonard, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., p. 22.



2. The first word of each sentence shall be capitalized.
3. All proper nouns must be capitalized.
4. Common nouns must not be capitalized.
5. Interrogative sentences end with a question mark.
6. Words, phrases, and clauses in series shall be separated by commas.
7. A comma shall be placed before "and" when used in a series.
8. Commas shall be used to set off such words as "also, nevertheless, namely, therefore, however," etc., when used parenthetically.
9. Commas shall be used to set off phrases and clauses when used parenthetically.
10. The apostrophe shall be used with contractions to mark the omission of letters.
11. The apostrophe shall be used to indicate the possessive of nouns.

When Leonard undertook the experiment, he chose twenty-eight rules for his error guide. The difficulty encountered in correcting the compositions forced him to shorten his guide to the above eleven principles. In correcting the compositions, he arrived at a percentage of error by dividing the number of errors by the number of opportunities for committing the error. He does not claim that this method is perfect, but he maintains that it is adequate for his purpose.

In general the method followed by Leonard was this: Each daily lesson was mimeographed and given to the children of both



groups. Part I for both groups consisted of (1) a review of previous lessons in the form of the statement of rules already learned, (2) a new rule with illustrations and specific explanations of each illustration. Leonard was careful to avoid the use of the term "rule." Part II for the Experimental Group consisted of proof-reading exercises, error correction exercises, and dictation exercises. Part II for the Control Group consisted of a correctly punctuated passage. The pupils were asked to explain why each mark of punctuation and why each capital letter had been used. Other devices, such as finding sentences or writing original sentences to illustrate the rules, explaining by pupils of correctly punctuated sentences on the board, and the writing of compositions, were used.

Seven months later the Leonard test was again administered. The gain in individual scores on this test was indicative of permanency of learning.

At the conclusion of the experiment Leonard came to certain definite conclusions. Those which have a direct significance for the problem of the writer are now presented:<sup>1/</sup>

1. The Leonard Proof-Reading test is a reasonably good instrument (validities .885 and .675; reliability .818) for predicting the average number of formal errors that these children will make in their ordinary classroom compositions....
10. The results of these tests show that the differences between every test, except

<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-48.





the Pressey Capitalization in the ninth grade, were in favor of the experimental groups. Or in other words, the practice exercises so improved the abilities of these pupils to punctuate that these differences were in evidence in tests of three types--proof-reading, error correction, and dictation.

11. The results of the compositions for the eighth grade show a mean difference in the percentage of error made to be 3.02% in favor of the experimental group. This difference is 2.11 times its own standard deviation of the difference and proves to be a significant difference.
12. The results of the compositions for the ninth grade show the mean difference in the percentage of error made to be 3.44% in favor of the experimental group. This difference is 3.59 times its own standard deviation of the difference and is a highly significant difference.
13. The results of the practice exercises are statistically convincing in the tests and in the compositions. The results show that the pupils taught by the use of the practice materials did almost twice as well in eliminating the eleven errors on their compositions as did those pupils who were taught by the methods used in the control groups. The experimental method enabled these children to reduce the errors on their compositions with these rules by two-thirds in eleven lessons  
....

Leonard believes that transfer has taken place to produce the large gains made by the experimental group. "If transfer has not taken place," he says, <sup>1/</sup> "there is a decided relationship between ability to proof-read and ability to write correctly." He further states:

1/Ibid., p. 48.



Both methods were valuable and both produced reliable gains in ability to punctuate....

What has been done for punctuation and capitalization is probably true for more general types of learning. Habits are better and more economically formed by practice in the skill to be acquired. Skills in other academic subjects could be better and more quickly learned by short periods of concentrated practice devoted to the specific elements involved, rather than by depending upon chance occurrence of such opportunities for learning the habits.

Conclusions.-- From the evidence that has been collected we are able to conclude that specialists in English are obviously aware of certain aspects of the problem but have failed to comprehend the total problem of making punctuation functional.

Salisbury has taken a great step forward in her interpretation of punctuation as depending on and being necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

Asker's report that the knowledge of formal grammar has apparently little transfer value as regards applied grammar is significant. Mere knowledge of correct usage by no means assures habitual correctness in the use of the mechanics of English expression. Knowledge must be accompanied by an understanding of why the usage is correct; understanding must be followed by many opportunities to apply the principle in question.

Asker has suggested that some educators believe that



correctness comes from habit. It would seem dangerous to accept this theory without considering its implications. The human being does not learn reflexly. Billett<sup>1/</sup> points out that recent experiments in the biology and psychology laboratories have "freed educational thought from the idea that valid laws of human learning must somehow be consistent with the reflex-arc hypothesis." Furthermore he states that scientists have made it clear "that each response of the organism, physical or mental, in some way involves the total organism, the whole individual, and that, hence, valid laws of learning must take this fact into account."

Leonard's chief contribution is that certain types of practice exercises appear effective in teaching the mechanics of written composition and that an abundance of practice material should be part of the classroom teacher's professional equipment.

Willing's chief contribution is the report that diagnostic tests are valid instruments to determine the needs of individual pupils.

Segel and Barr corroborate Asker's statement concerning the relation of formal grammar to applied grammar.

Shepherd's findings disclose that individualization of instruction is desirable. (Nevertheless, she has not completely  
1/Billett, op. cit., p. 88.





individualized her method.) She has also raised the question of establishing desirable pupil attitudes, without which there can be little real learning; and she points out that the highest degree of transfer can be achieved only when other departments cooperate with the English department in demanding high standards of good usage.

Leonard gives evidence of the effectiveness of teaching by means of practice exercises.

In general, these specialists have discovered that the traditional methods, which often employ formal grammar as the basis of punctuation, have been ineffective in securing a high degree of transfer; they have recognized a need for a teaching method which would afford more complete individualization; and they have discovered that practice exercises are effective in teaching mechanics.

The specialists have not discovered how complete individualization can be achieved, what kind of drill exercise must be devised to effect the desired end, nor when such exercises should be employed.

#### Evidence That the Percentage of Error in Punctuation Is High at All Grade Levels

The fact that pupils of all grade levels, including the levels of the college, demonstrate an alarming percentage of error in punctuating written composition is of major interest



to the English teacher who has recognized the existence of the problem in her own classroom. First, while it by no means condones poor punctuation in any given school system, it offers consolation of a sort; second, it offers a challenge to attempt to find a solution which may be of use to co-workers in the field of English instruction.

The desire to remedy the status quo at the secondary level is given impetus when the fact is realized that pupils in the upper grades of the high school are near the end of their formal schooling. Many will enter the business office, where correct use of punctuation will be essential to their success; many will enter college with its inevitable Freshman Composition course and other activities requiring clear written expression; all will read and write to a certain extent for the rest of their lives. If punctuation is accepted as a means of making a clear expression of the writer's meaning, as well as an aid in receiving thought from the written page, and if both these activities are admitted to be essential to harmonious living, it would seem that it should be the English teacher's desire to discover why punctuation is difficult for pupils and to attempt to remedy the situation.

At this time evidence that punctuation errors are a major part of all composition errors in pupils' school and out-of-school writing is presented.



Lyman reporting on Charters and Miller.-- Lyman<sup>1/</sup> reports an investigation made by Charters and Miller in Kansas City. The analysis of 4,819 compositions written in Grades VI and VII revealed that 47 per cent of the errors were in punctuation. This analysis was broken down into four types of errors:

1. Failure to put a period at the end of a statement.
2. Failure to put a question mark at the end of a question.
3. Failure to put an apostrophe to denote possession.
4. Failure to punctuate properly sentences containing dependent and independent clauses.

Lyman on Diebel and Sears.-- Lyman<sup>2/</sup> records that an investigation was made by Diebel and Sears in Cincinnati, in which it was discovered that errors in punctuation amounted to 30.8 per cent of all errors in the composition of pupils from Grade II to Grade VIII.

Lyman on Lyman, Johnson, Stormzand, and Armstrong.-- When we concern ourselves with the problem on the high school level, Lyman<sup>3/</sup> tells of an investigation into the types of technical errors of high school pupils carried on by Lyman, Johnson, Stormzand, and Armstrong.

Johnson tabulated the technical errors found in 50,371 words of composition written by 132 high school

1/R. L. Lyman, Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition, University of Chicago, Illinois, 1938, p. 82.

2/Ibid., p. 1.

3/Ibid., pp. 89-90.





freshmen in Kansas City.

Lyman studied the language errors of 322 freshmen in four high schools--Bloomington High School, Bloomington, Illinois; New Trier Township High School, Winnetka, Illinois; University High School, University of Chicago; and Vinton High School, Vinton, Iowa.

Stormzand studied the errors of 18,233 words of high school compositions in Freeport, Illinois. Armstrong based his study on 1,108 themes of freshmen and 909 themes of juniors in Northeast High School, Kansas City, Missouri.

These errors were tabulated according to rank of occurrence. The errors in punctuation ranked high; the average for the ten grades was 1.6.

The most common errors reported <sup>1/</sup> were "(1) Miscellaneous errors, (2) independent clauses of compound sentences not separated, (3) members of series not separated, and (4) no period."

Table 4. Errors According to Rank. <sup>a/</sup>

Investigator	Error	Rank by Grade					
		IX	X	XI	XII	IX-XII	IX-XI
Johnson	Punctuation	2					
	Apostrophe	6					
	Question Mark	13					
Lyman	Punctuation	1					
	Apostrophe	10					
	Question Mark	13					
Stormzand	Punctuation	1	1	1	1	1	
	Apostrophe	8.5	6	10.5	8.5	8	
	Question Mark	14	13	12	14	13	
Armstrong	Punctuation	3		2			3
	Apostrophe	10		9			9
	Question Mark	12		13			13

a/Ibid., p. 89, adapted.

1/Ibid., p. 96.



Anderson's findings.-- An analysis by Anderson described by Lyman disclosed that in the University High School, University of Chicago, 73 per cent of the composition errors were errors in punctuation; 63.6 per cent of these errors were in the use of the comma.

Illinois Association of Teachers of English.-- A study<sup>1/</sup> made by the Illinois Association of Teachers of English reported that "punctuation accounted for 37.2 per cent of errors in freshman composition and 41.7 per cent of the errors in senior work."

Ashbaugh.-- Ashbaugh<sup>2/</sup> made a study of letters written by junior and senior high school pupils to their friends. In them the errors in punctuation were frequent. The following table reveals Ashbaugh's findings.

Table 5. Punctuation Errors in Letters Not Intended for Teacher's Examination.<sup>a/</sup>

Error	Percentage of Error		
	Grade VII	Grade IX	Grade XII
Comma in parenthetical words, phrases, and clauses omitted....	87	68	71
Comma in heading, address, etc., omitted.....	58	61	45
Apostrophe of possession omitted	63	50	37
Question not followed by question mark.....	34	30	26
Comma in series omitted.....	22	19	11
Declarative sentence not closed with a period.....	23	15	16

<sup>a/</sup>Ibid., p. 310, adapted.

<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>2/</sup>E. J. Ashbaugh, "Non-School English of High School Students," Journal of Educational Research (June, 1921), 15:308-313.



Wood.-- Further proof of the existence of the problem at the college level is offered by Wood,<sup>1/</sup> who reports an investigation into the types of errors made in transcription. Out of a total of 10,800 errors found in 1,113 papers, 1,361 errors were in punctuation. These errors, 12.6 per cent of all errors, were second only to those made in shorthand.

Lyman on Johnson, Potter, and Parker.-- Lyman<sup>2/</sup> reports that Johnson found punctuation responsible for 12 per cent of composition errors among college freshmen; Potter at the University of California found that 22.3 per cent of all errors in composition were punctuation errors; while Parker at the same university found 29.5 per cent of all errors were in punctuation.

Bobbitt as reported by Lyman.-- Lyman<sup>3/</sup> reports on a study<sup>4/</sup> which was an analysis of samplings of a group of 362 letters made in written English by what Bobbitt calls the "literate portion of our population." These letters, which were sent to "The Voice of the People," a department of the Chicago Tribune, contained 7,110 errors--an average of 20 errors per 1/Ethel H. Wood, "Punctuation and the Transcript," Journal of Business Education (February, 1936), 11:13-14.

2/Lyman, op. cit., p. 94.

3/Ibid., pp. 95-96.

4/Franklin Bobbitt and others, Shortcomings in the Written English of Adults, Curriculum Investigations, Supplementary Education Monographs No. 31, Department of Education, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1926, pp. 110-118.





letter. Of these, punctuation errors totalled 2,796. Lyman writes:

The investigator analyzed the most frequent errors in punctuation to determine the specific ways in which generally accepted modes of punctuation were violated. These were classified as errors, not so much because they are violations of conventional rules but because they interfere with the reader's easy and rapid grasping of the thought of the writer. /The underscoring is the writer's./

The ten most frequent errors were as follows:

1. Commas incorrectly omitted with nonrestrictive or parenthetical modifiers.
2. Failure to use period to disassociate independent statements.
3. Incorrect punctuation of an abbreviation.
4. Superfluous punctuation.
5. Failure to properly disassociate the independent clauses in a long compound sentence.
6. Words in series not properly separated by commas.
7. Commas not used where needed to set off appositives.
8. Commas omitted where restrictive modifiers come between other closely related groups of words.
9. Failure to use a question mark after an interrogative sentence.
10. Omission of quotation marks with a direct quotation.



Helen W. Howard.-- As part of a study <sup>1/</sup> "to suggest a general plan to bring about greater mastery of the mechanics of written composition in grades seven, eight, and nine...." Howard classified the errors made in written compositions of 286 pupils in two different school systems. The percentage of punctuation errors for each grade was discovered to be as follows:

Table 6. Punctuation Errors in Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine <sup>a/</sup>

Type of Error	Percentage of Pupils Making the Error		
	Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX
1. Superfluous Punctuation	64	54	42
2. No Comma in Compound Sentence.....	48	45	51
3. No Comma after Introductory Clause.....	49	48	41
4. No Comma after Complimentary Close.....	42	35	38
5. No Comma in Addresses..	42	37	28
6. Omissions.....	36	26	41
7. No Period at End of Sentence.....	31	17	35
8. No Comma after Salutation.....	30	24	43

a/Ibid., pp. 13-22, adapted.

<sup>1/</sup>Helen W. Howard, "Errors in Certain Essentials of English Form in Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Boston University, 1936, p. 3.



Table 6. (concluded)

Type of Error	Percentage of Pupils Making the Error		
	Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX
9. No Comma after Abbreviation.....	19	14	18
10. No Apostrophe for Possession.....	25	35	38
11. No Colon or Comma after Salutation in Business Letter.....	27	7	18
12. No Interrogation Point after Interrogative Sentence.....	12	8	8
13. No Comma to Set Off Non-Restrictive Clause	13	28	32
14. No Comma to Set Off Quotations.....	4	1	2
15. No Comma in Series...	7	5	7
16. No Quotation Marks to Set Off Quotations...	3	3	2
17. No Apostrophe in Contractions.....	6	2	1
18. No Comma in Dates....	5	6	5
19. No Comma to Set Off Appositive.....	3	1	1
20. No Colon before Enumeration.....	3	1	2
21. No Comma to Set Off a Noun of Address.....	1	1	0
22. No Exclamation Point after Exclamatory Sentence.....	2	4	2
23. No Comma after Yes...	2	2	0





Miss Howard points out <sup>1/</sup> that

By the end of the ninth grade the students had failed to master any of the mechanics of written composition that caused the greatest number of errors in grade seven. This lack of mastery of the important principles of English in grades seven, eight, and nine, is one of the main causes of the faulty English of high school students. If this fact is true of this group....it is likely to be true of other groups.

Conclusions from the literature of the field.-- From the rather small sampling of literature presented above it is possible to arrive at certain conclusions. While the writer realizes the danger of making generalizations, it seems likely that what has been found to be true in the studies cited may be true of other groups of pupils.

That punctuation errors make up a large percentage of the total errors in written composition is evident from the statistics quoted. The percentage of error ranges from 12.6 per cent (in Wood's study) to 73 per cent (in Anderson's study). Punctuation errors exist at all grade levels, from the elementary school through to the college level and beyond. There is, apparently, very little growth in punctuation skill from grade to grade. This is especially true at the junior-high-school level, as Howard reveals. The most commonly misused marks appear to be the comma, the apostrophe, and marks at sentence endings. Errors of sense are by far the most numerous.

1/Ibid., p. 38.



Consideration of causes.-- Although it is not the purpose of the writer to find the cause of these errors at this time, it is interesting to consider causes briefly. Many of the errors are due, doubtless, to carelessness on the part of the pupils. "It is highly probable that many errors are due less to lack of knowledge than to lack of a high personal standard of usage," writes Ashbaugh.<sup>1/</sup> This matter of attitude is a subject with which we cannot deal at this time; yet it is a problem worthy of thought and study. This situation which involves writing a school composition is quite different from that which involves writing non-school compositions, such as Ashbaugh dealt with. Such activities are most likely to reveal the child's true expressional habits. Children are inveterate in disassociating school courses from each other. Consider the pupil whose posture in the gymnasium is excellent, while her posture in the classroom is far from healthful. Likewise consider the boy whose formal spelling ranks 100 per cent, while his spelling in composition work is abominable. Again, there is the general lowering of standards, disintegration, which occurs in some individuals when authority--in this case in the form of the corrector's red pencil--is absent.

Undoubtedly, many of the errors are due to the lack of sentence sense. In order to put correct punctuation at the

1/Ashbaugh. op. cit., p. 313.



end of a sentence a child must recognize that he has made a statement, or asked a question, or made an exclamation, or expressed a command. In order to avoid the "comma blunder" (using a comma between two main clauses when there is no conjunction) he must recognize the completion of one thought and the beginning of another. Before a pupil can punctuate a complete thought, he must have that thought, and recognize that he has it.

Philip Jenkins<sup>1/</sup> writes, "Punctuation is intimately bound up with the structure of any given sentence, and the structure is the result of the writer's processes of thought."

The Kerby-Millers<sup>2/</sup> offer:

In attempting to teach it [correctness], composition teachers are forced to deal with....(1) errors of sense, such as....grave errors of punctuation. Errors of sense....are the result of careless thinking, of incomplete planning. If a writer has carefully worked out his ideas so that he knows exactly what he wants to say, errors of sense will be extremely rare. Any person....who has gone through the public school system and been accepted as an entering student in a college knows enough not to be caught frequently saying one thing when he means another....he will not make such extreme mistakes in punctuation as to destroy the sense of what he has said. Such mistakes occur only when the meaning behind his statement is so confused or vague that it does not make any difference whether he does one thing or another....

<sup>1/</sup>Philip R. Jenkins, "Practical Punctuation," Education (February, 1937), 57:362.

<sup>2/</sup>C. W. and W. A. Kerby-Miller, "What Is Wrong with Freshman Composition?" English Journal, College edition (October, 1937), 26:632-633.





Since the causes of this type of error lie beneath surface, any attempt to eliminate them by rule is doomed to complete failure.

It is foolish to order him [the pupil] to punctuate soundly when he is not sure which is his main statement and which his supporting clauses.

Reports of investigations into the number and kinds of errors appearing in students' papers.... show that errors of sense are by far the most common.

It would seem that any course of study planned for pupils who commit the period error should provide much practice in sentence recognition and sentence writing. The usual textbook carries the statement: "Place a period at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence." One sentence for each of these sentence-types is given as illustration. Then the next punctuation rule is stated. The opportunity for placing periods at the end of declarative or imperative sentences does not usually occur until late in the book when an exercise is found in which many different marks are to be supplied. Here is an instance where the learning of the rule has little carry over into actual practice (to judge from such reports as have been cited). Possibly the difficulty lies in the fact that the teacher of the higher grade levels assumes that the error and the accompanying comma blunder are due to carelessness. Could it be possible, instead, that the pupil has never really mastered sentence sense although he should have done so years ago?



Searson<sup>1/</sup> quotes excerpts from letters expressing dissatisfaction with the results of English courses. In a tabulation of language skills<sup>2/</sup> necessary for ordinary success in life compiled from reports of 7,752 persons from 42 states in an attempt to find "what the public wants and declares it needs," 2,316 individuals responded that as part of general language skills the expression of sense was important. Six hundred and fifty-three of these responses came from teachers.

On Searson's table the following are indicative of the need for improved methods of teaching punctuation, if we agree that the use and understanding of punctuation are essential to the transfer of thought.

Language Skill Necessary for Ordinary Success	Number of Letters Men- tioning Skill
1. Skill to read and understand newspapers	6715
2. Skill to read and understand letters, orders, and contracts	5845
3. Ability to read and follow directions	5255
4. Ability to think clearly and concisely	4521
5. Ability to read and understand magazines	4450
6. Ability to write good business let- ters, forms, briefs, and reports	3068

<sup>1/</sup>J. W. Searson, "Determining a Language Program," English Journal (February, 1924), 13:99-114.

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., p. 102.



The evidence of interest on the part of educators in this aspect of the problem; namely, that logical thought, complete planning, and sentence sense are all necessary to correct punctuation, provides much food for thought and suggests a phase of the problem which bears investigation.

The writer suggests, however, that even in that Utopia where pupil attitudes are excellent, where sentence sense is fully developed, where carelessness plays no part in pupils' work, and where the knowledge of the correct forms of usage is universal--there is still need for the practice, drill, and repetition which result in habitual correctness.





## CHAPTER II

### STANDARDS OF PUNCTUATION

#### Contributions of Specialists

As it has been indicated in Chapter I, the establishment of standards is necessary before a method of teaching functional grammar and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression can be developed. Although the minimum essentials for any course of study will of necessity be determined by the needs of the pupils in each local system, in general the local faculty will be guided by the standards of good usage as they have been established by authorities and as they have been confirmed by current usage.

Goodman.-- Goodman<sup>1/</sup> undertook an experiment to determine three things in relation to the problem of punctuation and capitalization:

1. The relative growth in ability to punctuate and capitalize correctly from grade to grade.
2. The relative persistency of errors in punctuation and capitalization made by pupils in each grade from the fifth to the eleventh inclusive.
3. Whether or not the ranking order of errors

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<sup>1/</sup>J. H. Goodman, "Growth in Punctuation and Capitalization Abilities," Journal of Educational Research (November, 1934), 28:195.



made by pupils in rules of punctuation and capitalization remain constant from grades five to eleven inclusive.

Goodman felt that his study might supply data which would help in selecting rules to be taught in these grades. He administered the Leonard Diagnostic Test in Punctuation and Capitalization<sup>1/</sup> to 2,055 unselected pupils in Virginia and Missouri. Both city and rural school systems were represented. The rules arranged in order of descending percentage of error were as follows:

1. Use a semicolon to separate items of a series when commas are used within them.
2. Enclose literary titles in quotation marks.
3. Place a period after each initial or abbreviation.
4. Use the apostrophe to show the possessive of a noun.
5. By means of commas separate all direct quotations from the rest of the text matter.
6. Place a colon before a formal list.
7. Use the apostrophe to indicate the omission of a letter in a contraction.
8. Separate a parenthetical expression from the rest of the text matter by commas or dashes.
9. Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses when they are not closely or immediately related or when

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1/J. Paul Leonard, Leonard Diagnostic Test in Punctuation and Capitalization, World Book Company, Yonkers, New York, 1930.



they are not joined by conjunctions.

10. Place a comma before "such as" when used in a sentence to interrupt the principal thought or when used appositively or parenthetically.
11. By means of quotation marks separate all direct quotations from the rest of the text matter.
12. Commas are usually used to separate independent clauses that are joined by such coordinates as but, for, because, if, or, or and.
13. Set off by commas the name of the person addressed.
14. When a subordinate clause precedes a main clause, follow the subordinate clause by a comma.
15. Separate appositives by commas.
16. Set off nonrestrictive clauses and phrases by commas.
17. Place a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence.
18. Use a comma to set off the name of a state from the name of a place within the state, a street from a city, the year from the day of the month, a place from a date, or a name from a place.
19. Use the comma to separate words, phrases, and clauses in series; and put a comma before "and" when it is used to join the last two items of the series.
20. Place a period at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence.





The investigator tabulated the results in such a way as to indicate the decrease in the percentage of error made in

Table 7. Percentages of Error Made on Twenty Rules of Punctuation.<sup>a/</sup>

Rule	Grade Level						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.....	99	96	91	96	83	90	68
2.....	98	87	74	77	65	58	45
3.....	99	84	81	71	46	56	34
4.....	96	95	84	86	77	74	60
5.....	95	74	55	55	40	43	32
6.....	94	91	73	82	64	58	44
7.....	94	89	69	78	57	58	38
8.....	91	77	55	46	38	34	24
9.....	90	85	66	54	49	48	33
10.....	88	78	56	48	46	50	38
11.....	88	76	52	64	40	37	26
12.....	86	75	51	48	40	41	32
13.....	85	67	45	41	34	32	23
14.....	85	72	49	45	44	44	35
15.....	83	68	44	31	27	27	18
16.....	79	69	46	33	33	23	16
17.....	76	65	47	45	33	29	17
18.....	68	59	37	35	22	20	12
19.....	62	37	14	15	12	11	5
20.....	47	32	23	20	12	15	12

<sup>a/</sup>Goodman, op. cit., p. 198, adapted.

each rule from grade to grade. These figures represent the percentage of error made by 2,055 pupils with 250,710 opportunities for error. It can be clearly seen that the ability to punctuate increases on the average as the pupils progress through the grades. The ranking order of errors in the



eleventh grade varies slightly from that in the fifth grade.

Goodman suggests that an investigation into the difficulty experienced by the pupils in understanding the grammar behind each rule would be helpful.

Dora V. Smith.-- Dora V. Smith <sup>1/</sup> reporting on studies of pupil error in punctuation suggests that current usage, with the comma optional before the "and" in series and before the "and" in a short compound sentence, has invalidated certain findings relative to error. She offers a rough estimate of difficulty which has been obtained from eight studies. Three of these were in the elementary school; two, in the eighth and ninth grades; and three, in the high school. The following rating as to difficulty is based upon the number of studies in which each item appears in the top one-third, the middle one-third, or the lowest one-third in difficulty. An item consistently in the top one-third in difficulty would average 3; in the middle one-third, 2; and in the lowest one-third, 1. (Table 8.)

Ethel H. Wood.-- An investigation was carried on at the State College of Washington <sup>2/</sup> to determine where students make the greatest number of errors in transcription. Twenty-one

<sup>1/</sup>Dora V. Smith, "Diagnosis of Difficulties in English," National Society for the Study of English, Thirty-Fourth Year-book, pp. 229-267.

<sup>2/</sup>Ethel H. Wood, "Punctuation and the Transcript," Journal of Business Education (February, 1936), 11:13-14.



Table 8. Sixteen Punctuation Items with Rough Index of Difficulty.<sup>a/</sup>

Number	Rule	Index
1*	Comma between independent clauses of a compound sentence.....	3.00
2	Apostrophe.....	2.89
3	Period at end of declarative sentence.....	2.60
4*	Comma with a dependent clause out of order.....	2.50
5	Comma with nonrestrictive clause.....	2.25
6	Unnecessary comma inserted.....	2.25
7	Comma with appositive.....	2.16
8	Comma with parenthetical expression.....	2.00
9	Use of quotation marks.....	2.00
10*	Comma in the series.....	2.00
11	Period with abbreviations.....	1.80
12	Comma before broken quotations.....	1.80
13	Comma between city and state.....	1.66
14	Comma with direct address.....	1.50
15	Comma in dates.....	1.20
16	Interrogation point.....	1.00

<sup>a/</sup>Smith, op. cit., pp. 241-242. (Starred items subject to revision according to current usage.)

schools took part with a total of 1,113 papers examined. Out of a total of 10,800 errors, 1,361 were in punctuation. The findings revealed that the six usages causing the greatest





difficulty were as follows:

1. The comma
2. Colon before enumeration
3. Comma after a clause out of its natural order
4. The apostrophe
5. Commas placed in relation to quotation marks
6. Comma to separate parts of a compound sentence.

Lucia B. Mirrielees.-- From a list of minimum essentials of the matters of grammar, pronunciation, diction, spelling, and mechanics originally drawn up by the Council of Teachers of English and quoted by Lucia B. Mirrielees,<sup>1/</sup> the writer has selected such items as apply to the problem, "What marks should be taught and when should they be taught?" The list is as follows:

Freshman

1. Show properly where one sentence ends and another begins. (Stringy compound sentences should be broken up from the first. The requirement is that the material be at least separated into shorter sentences; however, where freshmen enter with this habit established, they should advance by learning to subordinate the lesser idea or ideas to the main thought.)
2. Unite fragments of sentences with proper assertion.

1/Lucia B. Mirrielees, Teaching Composition in the High School, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1931, pp. 325-328.



3. Use the apostrophe correctly to show the possessive case of nouns, and refrain from using the apostrophe in the possessive of personal pronouns.
4. Observe the common rules for punctuation. (The semicolon, colon, and dash are not here included .)
5. Regularly punctuate and paragraph conversation properly.
6. Write a business letter perfect as far as form is concerned.

#### Sophomore

1. Continue the requirements of freshman English.
2. Observe the rules for the semicolon, the colon, and the dash.

#### Junior

1. Continue the requirements for freshman and sophomore English.
2. Distinguish between a restrictive and nonrestrictive modifier, and know the usage in regard to punctuation in either case.

Sophia C. Camenisch.-- After ten years' study to determine the "items that are most worth teaching, and satisfactory sequences," Sophia C. Camenisch<sup>1/</sup> offered a "probable course in the mechanics of written English." The course was based on

1/Sophia C. Camenisch, "A Program of Mechanics in Written Composition," English Journal (October, 1932), 21:618-624.



firsthand experience, on a survey of courses of study, and on investigations reported by Lyman.<sup>1/</sup> The study was part of the investigator's work as member of a committee<sup>2/</sup> of the National Council of Teachers of English, and the resultant chart was criticized by members of the Board of Directors of the National Council of Teachers of English and by other investigators into the problem of essentials in written composition.

Miss Camenisch believes that in order to insure reasonable mastery of correct and important usages, the study of principles must be limited to "rock bottom" items. She states that time spent on mechanics should be reduced to a minimum by "rigid limitation to essentials" and "effective methods of instruction" in order to have enough time to develop power in the thought-content side of composition. Furthermore, she suggests that "since the teaching of any one specific skill is difficult," requiring careful presentation and a great deal of drill, only a few items can be dealt with in a school year. Therefore, the items should be those most useful to the pupil. For the purpose of checking mastery of usage she believes that much composition work is necessary.

1/Lyman, op. cit.

2/Miss Camenisch served as member of the Essentials Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1926 and as member of the Corrective Teaching Committee of the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English, 1935.





Miss Camenisch interprets her essentials thus: <sup>1/</sup>

1. The items included....are those that have been found to be practically universal problems. They have been checked specifically with more than six studies that report investigations of the usages of thousands of children (Wilson, Brown, McPhee, Charters, and others).
2. These are the ones to be practically mastered by all children. The emphasis in teaching is to be on those which the children need.
3. The correction of compositions and tests is to be primarily on those items unless all the children or a large majority need no further work on them.
4. Although individuals may go far beyond the minimum set for the group, the instruction and drill should be adapted to the majority. The children who need no such instruction can be given further tasks of another nature. Those who cannot reach the group level should be given remedial instruction.
5. Any individual child who needs in his writing an item listed in a later grade as an essential is to be encouraged to get such help from the teacher. All items needed by the group as a whole will be taught though not considered minima.
6. Previous items are to be held for cumulatively. It may be necessary to repeat items from grade to grade. There can be no failure to take responsibility for teaching an item that was listed in a lower grade. Only by cumulative holding can correct habits be guaranteed.

Miss Camenisch states that her chart is designed to be used to help evaluate material and that in any city or school, the items should be adapted to the local situation. As import

1/Camenisch, op. cit., pp. 622-623.

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benefits from forming and following such a chart she lists:

1. This display gives a bird's-eye view of the whole field of mechanics....
2. It furnishes a standard for checking any local course of study. It is a criterion for judging whether standard tests adequately provide for pupil needs.
3. It helps to insure a mastery of essentials.
4. It prevents the teaching of advanced material before the earlier is taught. The failure to get results is largely due to such dissipation of effort. The needs of advanced individuals can be taken care of adequately without teaching a whole group what is beyond them.
5. Only by some such means as this, with a program carried on by a school as a whole, can any real advance be made....

Miss Camenisch concludes with these words:

The writer is convinced that only by adopting and carrying out a program of essentials in any school unit can the study of mechanics be restricted sufficiently so that the chief emphasis may be placed on the effectiveness of communication. If many schools would make whatever local adjustments were necessary in the chart and institute a drive on this problem, perhaps something might be accomplished in reducing the enormous waste of time on ineffective drill and on "grammar" which does not result in improved speaking and writing.

Because the writer's problem deals specifically with punctuation, only those items that deal with that phase of mechanics are here presented. 2/

1/Ibid., pp. 623-624.

2/Ibid., pp. 619-621. (The chart was condensed by Miss Camenisch for this article.)



## I. Elementary School

End punctuation:

Period

Question mark

Exclamation

Period after abbreviation

Simple quotation, not in indirect

Simple punctuation in letters, especially comma  
between items in dates and addresses

Avoid over-use of comma

## II. Junior High School

Mastery of all the items for the elementary school  
should be required.

Broken quotation

Comma: in series before conjunction; noun of address; appositive; parenthetical; separate introductory expressions; initial participial phrase; etc.

Semi-colon: between clauses

Colon: for letter and enumeration; to indicate time

Avoid over-use of the comma and the use of the  
interrogation point in indirect question.

## III. Not Before Senior High School

Mastery of all items for the elementary and junior  
high school should be required.

Comma: problem of restrictive and non-restrictive

Punctuation with "that is," "for example," etc.

Dash





Colon for advanced work

Quotation within quotation

The problem of current usage.-- One can hardly be unaware of the fact that current usage should be considered in determining what punctuation is to be taught. If we are to bring our course of study to meet the needs of the pupils, there is little reason for teaching those usages which have long been out of date. As one criteria stated by the National Council of Teachers of English <sup>1/</sup> we find: "Correct usage must find its authority in the living language of today."

Ruhlen and Pressey.-- Ruhlen and Pressey <sup>2/</sup> studied all the punctuation found in one hundred business letters, in fifty professional letters, in samplings from five magazines of definite literary character, and in four newspapers. In all, 38,638 words were examined.

These investigators, discovering that the comma and period make up 87 per cent of all marks used, maintain that punctuation drill in the early grades should be on the items most frequently found in current usage, and to guide teachers in the delimitation of the subject they proposed the following list of minimum essentials: <sup>3/</sup>

1/National Council of Teachers of English, An Experience Curriculum in English, English Monograph No. 4, 1935, p. 242.

2/Helen Ruhlen and S. L. Pressey, "A Statistical Study of Current Usage in Punctuation," English Journal (May, 1924), 13: 325-331.

3/Ibid., pp. 329-330.



### 1. Full stops:

Use a question mark after a direct question (not after an indirect question).

Use an exclamation point after a sentence, exclamation, or interjection to show strong emotion or surprise.

At the end of other sentences use a period. Use a period also after abbreviations and initials.

### 2. Pauses within a sentence:

Use a comma (1) to set off slightly parenthetical phrases or clauses; (2) to set off clearly introductory words, phrases, or clauses at the beginning of a sentence or obviously added elements at the end; (3) to separate words or phrases in a series; and (4) to separate clauses joined by and, but, for, as, or any other simple conjunction. The comma is also used (5) to separate the parts of a date or address, (6) to introduce a short quotation, and (7) after a complimentary close of a letter.

Use a semicolon (1) between clauses of a compound sentence that are not joined by a conjunction and (2) to make prominent a division within a sentence when the parts separated are very long or have commas within themselves.

Use a colon (1) after words, phrases, or sentences serving as a formal introduction to something that follows, as a list on a long quotation. Use the colon also (2) after the salutation in a letter and (3) between the hours and minutes in a statement of time.

Use a dash to indicate a marked break in the progress of thought in a sentence, as when an explanatory element is obviously inserted. The parenthesis may also be used for this last purpose.

### 3. Special marks:

Use the apostrophe (1) to indicate the omission of a letter or letters in a word, and (2) to indicate the possessive case. However, possessive personal



pronouns (its, his, theirs, yours, ours) do not take the apostrophe.

Use quotation marks (1) to inclose a direct quotation (not an indirect quotation) and (2) to indicate the title of a theme, a short story, a magazine article, a poem, or play. However, italicize the names of books and magazines (italics to be indicated by underlining). Quotation marks may also be used to call attention to technical, foreign, or unusual words used with some special (as ironical, or humorous) meaning.

The following statistics<sup>1/</sup> based on the examination of 10,000 words in magazines, newspapers, and letters are significant in determining what marks are needed by pupils:

Table 9. Frequency of Punctuation in 10,000 Words.

Mark	Times Used	Mark	Times Used
Comma.....	556	Semicolon.....	22
Period.....	535	Dash.....	21
Quotation Mark..	44	Question Mark...	14
Apostrophe.....	40	Colon.....	11

Conclusions.-- The evidence indicates that the comma, the apostrophe, and the marks at sentence endings are the marks which are consistently misused or omitted in pupils' compositions and tests. Although one class will differ from another in its specific weaknesses and needs, it seems safe to assume that on the whole these marks will cause trouble for at least

<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 327, adapted.





a few individuals in every class. This fact should be taken into consideration by the teacher who is preparing practice materials to meet whatever needs may arise. It would seem that in any method of teaching punctuation the most serious errors should be corrected first. Who can deny that faulty end punctuation is more serious than the omission of the comma before the "and" in a series? In many instances incorrect end punctuation with its close relative, the comma blunder, is due entirely to lack of sentence sense on the part of the writer. It seems sensible to suggest that such pupils as lack sentence sense be required to master that concept and understand the correct punctuation for each kind of sentence before being allowed to go on to other punctuation usages. According to Salisbury's conclusions, pupils who can understand the concepts of "sentence," "equal elements," and "dependent elements" should be able to express thoughts clearly in written language correctly punctuated with only the comma and end marks.

A pupil of any grade who demonstrates an ability to write the more complicated sentence patterns requiring other marks of punctuation should, of course, be encouraged to understand and employ them when the need for them arises in his written composition.

Salisbury's declaration that many of the traditional rules can be combined into two or three inclusive rules is worth consideration. For instance, by grouping together the non-restrictive clause, the parenthetical expression, the nominative



of address, the introductory adverbial clause, the nonrestrictive noun phrase, and the nonrestrictive participial phrase, and terming them "words that turn the thought," Miss Salisbury reduces six concepts to one expressed in such a way as to arouse the interest of the pupil and to impress him with the relation of the thought of a sentence to its punctuation.

By applying such an all-inclusive rule, the child's reason, not his memory, is exercised.

It would be difficult to set down arbitrarily definite areas of punctuation to be mastered at specific grade levels, since there is such a variation in student abilities and student needs at every grade level.

Pupils can be found at the ninth-grade level who demonstrate greater ability in the mechanics of written composition than do some upper classmen or even some college students. In view of this fact, the writer suggests that any local staff attempting to establish certain standards of good usage in the form of a list of requirements would be wise to formulate a list of usages to be mastered by the twelfth grade, rather than by each separate grade level in the secondary school. Thus all the experiences of the child in the English class will contribute to an integrated six-years' growth and not to yearly growth for each of six years.

As a guide in compiling a list of essentials, error studies and current usage should, it would seem, be consulted.



Certain standardized tests, such as the Leonard Diagnostic Test, would prove helpful in selecting usages. The writer offers the following master list of the usages which seem worth stressing in the secondary school. These usages are stated for teachers' consideration. Before being presented to pupils of the secondary-school grades, many would, of course, be adapted in vocabulary to the level of the child's understanding.

#### A Master List of Punctuation Usages

##### Period

1. A period is used after a declarative sentence.
2. A period is used after an imperative sentence.
3. A period is used after a request.
4. A period is used after an abbreviation that stands for a single word.
  - a. A period is not used after "Miss," as in "Miss Jones."
  - b. A period is not used after per cent.
  - c. A period is not used after Roman numerals.
5. A period is not used after a title of a book, poem, play, or other composition.
6. A period is not used after a signature, as at the end of a letter.





## Comma

7. To set off an expression requires two commas unless it comes at the beginning or end of the sentence.
8. A comma is used to set off the name of the person addressed.
9. As a rule, appositives are set off by commas.
  - a. Appositives preceded by "or" are set off.
  - b. The comma is not used to set off closely connected appositives.
  - c. The comma is used to set off a person's title when it follows his name.
10. Most parenthetical expressions are set off by commas.

Such expressions as "however," "on the other hand," "for example," "for instance," "by the way," "to tell the truth," "to say the least," "I think," "I believe," and "I repeat" are set off.

  - a. The comma, as a rule, is not used to set off "also," "perhaps," "indeed," "therefore," "at least," "nevertheless," "likewise."
  - b. "Well," "why," or "now" is usually set off at the beginning of a conversational sentence.
11. The comma is used to separate words, phrases, and short main clauses in series.
  - a. When each item is joined to the previous item by a conjunction, the commas may be omitted if the meaning is clear without them.





- b. When only the last item is preceded by a conjunction, the comma may be omitted before the conjunction provided that the meaning is clear to the reader without it.
  - c. A comma is not used between two adjectives preceding a noun when they are not coordinate in thought.
  - d. If the trial insertion of "and" between two adjectives modifying a noun does not change the meaning, a comma is needed.
12. In an address or date each item after the first should be set off by commas.
13. The comma is used to set off contrasting expressions introduced by "not."
14. A comma is used after the salutation of a friendly letter and after the complimentary close of all letters.
15. A comma is used to prevent misreading.
- a. Use a comma between identical words standing next to each other.
  - b. Use a comma between two figures or words indicating figures to make their meaning clear.
16. As a rule, the comma is used between the principal clauses of a compound sentence if they are joined by "and," "but," "or," "nor," "so," "yet," or "while."
17. A comma is used to indicate the omission of a verb.



18. A comma is used to set off an informal direct quotation.
19. Use a comma after an introductory adverbial clause. A short restrictive clause does not need the comma.
20. A nonrestrictive clause or phrase is set off by a comma.
21. A descriptive phrase following the noun it modifies is set off by a comma.
22. An introductory absolute phrase is set off by a comma.

### The Semicolon

23. As a rule, the semicolon is used between the clauses of a compound sentence if they are not joined by a conjunction.
  - a. When the connecting word is "moreover," "consequently," "thus," "hence," "therefore," "besides," "also," "nevertheless," "still," "otherwise," "likewise," or another independent adverb, the semicolon is used.
  - b. The semicolon or the comma may be used before "yet," "so," or "then," in a compound sentence.
  - c. As a rule, a semicolon is used to separate the main clauses of a compound sentence joined by a conjunction when there is a comma in any of the main clauses.
24. "Namely," "for instance," "for example," "that is," and "as," when introducing enumerations or explanations, are preceded by the semicolon and followed by the comma.



### Colon

25. Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.
26. Use a colon to introduce a list of items, a formal quotation, or a formal statement.

### Interrogation Point

27. The interrogation point is used after a direct question, but not after an indirect question.
  - a. Place the question mark inside of the quotation mark when it is a part of the quoted matter.
  - b. Place the question mark outside of the quotation mark when it is not a part of the quoted matter.

### Exclamation Point

28. Use an exclamation point to mark an expression of strong or sudden emotion.
29. Use an exclamatory point after a sentence interrogative in form but exclamatory in meaning.

### Dash

30. The dash is used to mark an abrupt change in thought.
31. The dash is used sometimes to set off parenthetical, appositive, or explanatory material.
32. The dash is used to indicate an unfinished sentence or hesitancy in speech.
33. The dash is used before a word that sums up preceding particulars.





### Quotation Marks

34. Double quotation marks are used to enclose a direct quotation, but no quotation marks are used with an indirect quotation.
35. Single quotation marks are used to enclose a quotation within a quotation.
36. When two or more paragraphs are quoted, place quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last paragraph.
37. Use quotation marks to set off from the context any quoted or emphasized word or short phrase.
38. Quotation marks are often used to enclose titles of books; magazines; and essays, poems, and plays of book length. As a rule, in a handwritten manuscript such items are underlined.
39. The titles of chapters, articles, essays, and short poems are usually enclosed in quotation marks, but they may be underlined.

### Parentheses

40. Parentheses are used to enclose a side remark which does not affect the structure of the sentence.
41. Parentheses are used to enclose interpolated explanatory matter.



### Apostrophe

42. The apostrophe is used to denote ownership.
43. The apostrophe is used in contractions to take the place of the omitted letter or letters.
44. The apostrophe is used to form the plural of letters, figures, and signs.



CHAPTER III  
SPECIMEN PRACTICE MATERIALS AND SUGGESTED CLASSROOM  
PROCEDURE FOR MAKING PUNCTUATION FUNCTIONAL

Traditional Methods and Materials

Many methods have been urged by which pupils can be taught to punctuate efficiently. A brief resumé of these suggestions would be helpful, it would seem, to one searching for a method to use in his classroom.

R. A. Sharp.-- Leonard<sup>1/</sup> points out that Sharp advocates dictation exercises because they are easily administered and possess unquestionable values. Sharp is quoted as saying, "....usually errors in punctuation may be disposed of by asking, 'How should this sentence be punctuated?'"

I. E. Goldwasser.-- Lyman<sup>2/</sup> indicates that Goldwasser, who also believes in dictation, proposes, "'Have children read correct sentences from books and state the rules for punctuation as a result of observation. Give them incorrect sentences and have them correct the punctuation or have the sentence contain no punctuation and ask the pupils to supply it.'" Goldwasser also advocates that pupils explain

<sup>1/</sup>Leonard, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2/</sup>Lyman, loc. cit.



punctuation usages in correct sentences and compose sentences to illustrate definite rules.

E. A. Cross.-- In reporting further on the subject, Lyman reveals that Cross believes, "Punctuation cannot be learned by using a mark in a given situation a single time. It is over and over until what he knows as an intelligent fact has become a habit in his neurones." Cross believes that pupils should punctuate miscellaneous sentences and search for illustrative material in books and magazines. Lyman quotes Cross as follows:

There should be practice in the correct use of punctuation and neglect of the use of the incorrect until new forms have become well established to take the place of the old. There should be frequent reviews at intervals even after the teacher feels that the new habits have become fixed and the old bonds have faded out.

T. H. Briggs.-- Briggs is quoted by Lyman<sup>1/</sup> as saying:

Details of form are best considered in situ when needs arise. However, to assure consideration of such matters as are considered necessary for all pupils, forms--spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the like--should be systematically distributed throughout the course, a few taken at each lesson. The most fundamental matters of form should receive such thorough and repeated drill--in situ when possible--as to stamp them in thoroughly.

University of Chicago High School.-- An examination of a publication of the University of Chicago<sup>2/</sup> reveals that punctuation

1/Ibid.

<sup>2/</sup>E. E. Shepherd, H. A. Anderson, Russell Thomas, Gladys Campbell, Arthur Traxler with the cooperation of R. L. Lyman, English Instruction in the University High School, Publication of the Laboratory Schools of the University of Chicago, No. 4, October 1933, University of Chicago, Illinois, p. 15.





is taught in the University High School by a so-called unit method. In the freshman English course a unit is taught entitled "How Simple Sentences Are Combined and Punctuated." The children are taught the compound sentence and its punctuation, the complex sentence, the compound-complex sentence. They are advised to avoid the compound structure if a complex sentence can be built. Furthermore they are taught that "the use of appropriate punctuation to separate the statements of a compound-complex sentence may be necessary or desirable to enable the reader to get the right thought easily."

A commonly used method.-- The usual textbook<sup>1/</sup> which serves as the basis of many English courses contains a section dedicated to punctuation in which the rules are stated and illustrated in one or two sentences. Practice exercises follow. These exercises often seem too easy or too difficult for the average pupil; in addition, they contain too few opportunities for the application of the rules. Seldom is there given an explanation of why the usage exists. Always the rules are based on grammar concepts; never is the relation of the punctuation to the meaning of the sentence considered.

In many English courses all pupils begin at the same page at the same time and go through the book at the same

<sup>1/</sup>The writer has examined such widely used texts as J. C. Tressler, English in Action, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1940; Lucy H. Chapman and Luella B. Cook, Using English, Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1936.



rate of speed. Even in such well organized programs as make use of diagnostic instruments in planning the course of study, the same instruction is given to all pupils at the same time. Little attention is paid to the needs of the individual pupil. As a result, time is wasted for some pupils in needless, uninteresting repetition of that which has already been learned. Too often it is assumed that when a class has studied the section all members should be able to use the rules and to punctuate with ease and with habitual correctness.

In many English courses the study of punctuation is preceded by what we will call in this study the "Grammar Approach to Punctuation." Beginning with a definition of each of the parts of speech, the entire class goes along the well-known route meeting phrases, clauses, verbals, and all the other sentence elements. The recognition of the parts of a sentence is generally believed to facilitate the pupil's ability to grasp and use the rules of punctuation that apply to each sentence element, in spite of the fact that little, if any, punctuation is taught in connection with these elements at this time in the course of study. After the grammar section has been studied, the other sections are treated in turn. Often the completion of the punctuation drills is considered sufficient formal drill.

A method of meeting individual differences.-- No educator who is interested in the optimal growth of the child will



deny the theory of individualization. Curriculum investigators stress the significance of individual diagnosis and an individualized curriculum based on language needs. He who wishes to make the activities of the classroom more efficient by avoiding the wasteful repetition of unnecessary drill materials realizes the advantage of a method that would allow each child to work at his own level, independent of the other pupils.

The difficulty experienced by most classroom teachers is in adjusting the ideal, complete individualization, to the real, large classes and scanty teaching materials. There is need for the creation of a method which will result in a higher degree of individualization than has hitherto been possible in the average classroom.

Philip Jenkins<sup>1/</sup> decries that pupils learn to punctuate by punctuating the thoughts of others constructed after such sentence-patterns as the average pupil will never use himself. Stressing that the natural evolution is first, a thought process in the pupil's mind; second, the structure of a sentence containing that thought; and third, the punctuation of the sentence so as to convey the thought, Jenkins suggests that the ideal method would be as individualized as possible. In view of the difficulty of individual instruction in large classes

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<sup>1/</sup>Philip R. Jenkins, "Practical Punctuation," Education (February, 1937), 57:360-364.





Mr. Jenkins says:<sup>1/</sup> "The next best thing, then, is to evolve some methods of drill in which the pupil will be forced to punctuate certain kinds of sentences, but at the same time do his own thinking and actual composition of sentences."

He suggests such exercises as these:

1. In a single balanced sentence arrange the following items without using any additional dependent clauses. You are to have two independent clauses.
  - a. Albert Rand recognized the man.
  - b. Bob recognized him too.
  - c. I knew this by the way they eyed the man as he passed.
2. Write a sentence in which you name three books you have recently read.
3. Answer the following questions in the negative, and then give additional information about what you did do.
  - a. Did you close the window?
  - b. Were you late for school this morning?
  - c. Have you attended any basketball games this winter?

Jenkins<sup>2/</sup> stresses that "the important thing to notice is that he [the pupil] composes the answer himself and punctuates his own ideas."

Jenkins<sup>3/</sup> maintains that "We seem to be twenty years behind the times in our teaching of punctuation and a brief glance at the revised manner of teaching other subjects affords insight into this." He suggests that we must allow the pupil to

1/Ibid., p. 363.

2/Ibid., p. 363.

3/Ibid., p. 364.



compose his own materials as far as possible. It is not enough, he believes, to afford the students experience in punctuating the thoughts of others; they must have practice in punctuating their own thoughts. Jenkins found that exercises patterned after such examples as have been previously cited in this paper achieved his goal and resulted in the incidental products of concentration on a given task and actual enjoyment of the work. Jenkins believes that

Punctuation is a component part of that whole process we call writing; first of thinking, then forming those thoughts into sentences, and finally putting them down on paper. And since this is so, we must change our method of teaching punctuation from the present detached manner to one which makes of punctuation a function of a whole process.

Often we educators are faced with the accusation that the products of our schools are not trained to think. Such exercises as these described by Jenkins, if used throughout the years of formal education with such adaptation as is necessary to meet the subject matter of other courses, might result in more pupils who would be able to think and apply their acquired knowledge not only to familiar situations but to the new and unforeseen. Such intelligent application is the end and all of education.

Worthy as Jenkins's proposed method is, it does not go far enough, for the entire class is still working on the same technical error at the same time.



Correlating punctuation with other skills.-- The writer views the subject of punctuation as a means to an end, a contributing factor to a far wider concept than it is itself; namely, clear expression. As such it must be taught. No matter how modernized our method, how sound our technique, if punctuation is taught for its own sake and by itself, divorced from the other activities of the English course, we have made no progress in solving our problem.

<sup>1/</sup>  
Cross and Carney say:

In this business of presenting punctuation many other things will be taught. Clearness of expression is a necessary part of this teaching, but now and then a spelling demon will be cleared up, a capital letter will be emphasized, an apostrophe will take its proper place, or a paragraph indentation will play an important part in class thinking.

<sup>2/</sup>  
Three trends in the English curriculum.-- Lyman reports that three trends in the modern English course are as follows:

1. The attempt to secure for our pupils better unity of design, greater continuity in educational experiences, is an attempt to meet the criticism that our curriculum is made up of fragmentary, scattered, unrelated experiences.

2. The trend of relating the experiences of school life much more intimately with the normal out-of-school life of pupils and adults is an attempt to meet the criticism that the American curriculum is exceedingly academic. And is especially

<sup>1/</sup>E. A. Cross and E. Carney, "Punctuation," Chapter XI, Teaching English in High Schools, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1939, p. 243.

<sup>2/</sup>R. L. Lyman, "English in Relation to Three Major Curriculum Trends," English Journal (March, 1936), 25:191.





inadequate in training intelligent, right-minded citizens for our changing democracy.

3. These two trends, for unity of design and normalcy in educational experience, are closely related to a third trend; namely, more intimate associations between departments. This trend, which is sometimes called correlation or integration, attempts to meet the criticism of extreme specialization in subject-matter departments. Life is not lived in fragments, but in wholes.

From Lyman's report we conclude that three characteristics are desirable of any curriculum activity. (1) It should be related to other experiences in the course of study. (2) It should be patterned after lifelike activities. (3) It should, when possible, be correlated with activities in other subject fields.

What can we use of these conclusions in devising methods of teaching punctuation? We have already suggested that punctuation be taught as a necessary part of written composition, but not as an end in itself. In attempting to teach composition it is possible to make use of such activities as pupils themselves carry on outside of school: the friendly letter, the social note, the business letter, the notice of a club meeting. In correlating with the work in other departments, papers written for history, or science, or geography, or another course may well serve as an English exercise. The pupil thereby would come to realize that English is of value in helping him write good papers for other classes and that





The following text is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document, possibly a report or a letter, but the content cannot be transcribed due to the low quality of the scan. The text is organized into several distinct blocks, suggesting paragraphs or sections of a document.

English is a tool to be used beyond the walls of his English classroom.

By such means as are here suggested instruction adapts itself to the needs of everyday life and makes school experiences resemble the experiences of everyday life.

The writer has had repeated confirmation in her own secretarial classes of the fact that there is little carry-over when the girls do transcriptions for the shorthand teacher. Girls who consistently punctuate well in the English class demonstrate poor ability in punctuating a business letter taken in shorthand. It would seem advisable to model the practice exercises in English after the letters and business forms used in the business subject fields. By a double emphasis on such work a higher degree of achievement should be reached in both classes.

#### A Functional Method

Before one sets about devising a method of teaching any skill, it is well for him to review certain criteria which, as Billett<sup>1/</sup> says, "must function in every good teaching-learning situation." These criteria, or standards, are as follows:

1. Education is guided and directed growth....
2. The pupil's activities are given direction only by some goal which he seeks to attain....

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<sup>1/</sup>Billett, op. cit., pp. 174-175.



3. Problem-solving is the way of human learning....
4. Learning is most effective when optimally emotionalized....
5. Persistence in problem-solving behavior varies with the explicitness of the directions which the pupils receive....
6. Knowledge of progress is a powerful incentive to effort....
7. All learning involves integration....
8. Application of the learning product is essential if transfer is to take place....
9. Independence in learning is encouraged if the pupil has some choice in what he is to do, how he is to do it, and when he is to do it....
10. Because of the fact of individual differences, pupils should not begin necessarily at the same place, nor proceed necessarily at the same rate, in the same direction, and in the same way....

The problem before us is to devise a method of teaching punctuation so that it will be functional for our pupils while they are in our classes and later when they have graduated.

Statement of a goal.-- Before we can adopt a definite plan, it is necessary to decide what marks of punctuation we are to teach. In other words, we must delimit our subject and set a goal for the grade level at which we are working. This preliminary delimitation may take the form of a list of rules which are to be mastered at each grade level, or it may be a less specific statement such as the writer sets forth in the chart on page 71 of this manuscript.



No chart or set of rules can be arbitrarily set forth by any writer, as the needs of the individual classes vary with their educational backgrounds. Anyone planning to follow the suggestions made in this paper should make such adaptations as are necessary to suit his local teaching problem. The point to be emphasized is that a specific goal should be set for each grade level so that there will be a continuous growth in punctuation ability through the grades of the secondary school and so that haphazardness of teaching and of learning, which often results from the lack of a clearly defined goal, may be avoided.

Punctuation a function of a larger skill.-- Punctuation is only one factor of a larger activity, written composition. The writer believes that it should be taught as such and not as an isolated activity. Billett<sup>1/</sup> writes:

Secondary-school composition includes both oral and written expression. As the pupil develops power in the use of the spoken word he necessarily masters certain functional elements of grammar, syntax, and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression. Moreover, development of power in composition is of course interrelated inextricably with development of power to get thought from the printed page; and, conversely, reading contributes inevitably to vocabulary, to one's knowledge of the principles of grammar, syntax, and the mechanics of form, usage, and expression. Hence, to be most effective, the work in reading and composition, along with the really functional aspects of grammar, syntax, and other mechanics of form, usage, and expression, should be

1/Ibid., pp. 204-205.





carefully planned to take advantage of the many existing interrelationships.

Since mechanical errors arise irregularly in the classroom, it is inefficient to teach mechanics by group instruction.

The writer proposes that the course of study be organized into units of work, a unit of composition alternating with a unit of literature but both containing reading and writing activities. Concerning this type of organization Billett writes:<sup>1/</sup> "Most better-than-average schools appear to be alternating large units of composition with large units of reading at intervals of about a month." For instance, a unit can be organized for the business letter, the social letter, exposition, simple narration, the news story, or some other problem in composition. In such organization the English teacher should keep in mind the need for adjusting the course of study to the present and future needs of her pupils. She should consider such reports as that made by Searson (see page 52) and devise units the aim of which is to develop such skills and abilities as are there listed.

After the unit has been stated, certain incidental learning products will be listed; namely, correct punctuation, correct usage, capitalization, sentence sense, vocabulary building, spelling, and other mechanical factors. Although punctuation and the other mechanics will be considered as

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<sup>1/</sup>Ibid., p. 189.



incidental to the core activity, they are by no means to be treated casually. Well-organized drill exercises will be employed and time will be allotted for a maximum of drill where there is apparent need for it. Just as the teacher has delimited punctuation for the grade level, so she will delimit the other mechanics. As an example, in teaching a unit on the business letter a definite number of business terms will be listed for vocabulary and spelling goals.

Motivation.-- In introducing the first unit of composition, the teacher should plan the motivation to provide for arousing interest in the incidental learning products as well as in the larger aspects of the work. In dealing with punctuation there is often the difficulty of overcoming extreme apathy as well as errors. Although the writer has suggested that high individualization is necessary, the motivation of the pupils can be accomplished through a socialized activity in which punctuation is revealed as an instrument to make meaning clear. This can be done by an exercise containing such problems as are suggested on page 10 of this manuscript.

When the class has been aroused to the purpose of and need for correct punctuation, the individual must be motivated to improve his own skill. The writer, working with a tenth-grade class, used with excellent results the following method, which combines diagnosis and motivation. The unit of composition

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dealt with the personal experience, chosen because the writer adheres to the theory that pupils write best about that which they know best and in which they are most interested. The purpose was, of course, to encourage the pupils to present their ideas in a natural way approximating their habitual methods of expression.

Compositions were assigned without any mention of punctuation or other mechanics. The writer then examined the papers and checked the errors which had been made. Willing's <sup>1/</sup> comments on such diagnostic procedure are as follows:

The validity of the single theme as a diagnostic measure of composition seems not to have been questioned at all. The Committee on Examinations of the National Council of Teachers of English, through its Chairman, gave detailed directions in The English Journal of September, 1923, for the use of a single theme on "An Experience Which I Shall Never Forget" to determine group and individual weaknesses. "On the basis of this diagnosis, plans should be made for individual and class drills and for other remedial exercises."

Errors in only those rules which were listed in the minimum essentials for the grade level were indicated. In this way there was a limit to the number of usages in which a child might be weak; and, with one or two exceptions, the lists of errors were short enough to make the goal appear accessible and to prevent discouragement at the outset. Each child was

1/Matthew H. Willing, Valid Diagnosis in High School Composition, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 230, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1926, p. 4.





given a chart on which his errors were listed as goals to be achieved. Typical charts were as follows:

Pupil A	Punctuation Goals
---------	-------------------

1. Series
2. Compound Sentence

Pupil B	Punctuation Goals
---------	-------------------

1. Apostrophe for Possession
2. Sentence Sense
3. Mental Detour

A statement of the rule to be learned and applied habitually was carefully avoided on the chart, since the writer planned to have each child make his own statement of the rule as part of the learning process. <sup>1/</sup>

Mirrielees expresses the same idea thus: <sup>2/</sup>

Before discussing any rule or definition.... one general principle, true in all teaching, must be recalled: No definition should be given until after many illustrations have been placed upon the board and thoroughly discussed. Then and then only is it wise to crystallize the information thus gained into a definition. But even then it is wiser to allow variation and personal expression of the idea in the words of the pupil than to demand a set formula. Why? Because grammar must be kept a process of thinking, not a function of memory.

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<sup>1/</sup>The writer wishes to acknowledge Dr. Roy O. Billett as the originator of this idea, which he emphasizes in his course in Secondary-School Curricula at Boston University.

<sup>2/</sup>Mirrielees, op. cit., p. 33.





As soon as the individual goals had been set, the class was ready for a period of individualization.

Before the unit of composition was introduced in the classroom, the instructor had prepared a series of work sheets designed to provide drill material for each of the rules listed in the delimitation. A practice sheet on one of the usages which he had to master was given to each pupil. For example, Pupil A was given a sheet for the comma in series; Pupil B, for sentence sense; Pupil C, for the Mental Detour. The pupils set about doing the exercises on the practice sheets while the teacher supervised and gave individual help when the need arose. No pupil was wasting time in needless drill for usages he had already mastered. No pupil was held back by the slower members of the group. Each worked at his own level and at his own rate of speed.

A description of the work sheets.-- The work sheets were an attempt to provide drill materials that would be more effective in teaching punctuation than the traditional textbook exercises have apparently been. Instead of using the approach in which a rule is stated and the pupil is directed to apply it to a given exercise, the writer decided to present the pupil with a problem in inductive reasoning.

The principle of induction applies to the development of all concepts. No pupil can learn to punctuate correctly by



merely memorizing rules. He must formulate the rules from his own observation of correctly punctuated sentences. After that, he should apply the rule to an abundance of practice materials and original composition. This method of encouraging educational growth is outlined by Billett<sup>1/</sup> who summarizes the thought process thus:

1. [a person] faces a felt need or difficulty.  
In an effort
2. to define the need or difficulty he
3. studies the situation in which the need or difficulty occurs, and collects what appear to be pertinent facts. He studies these data, organizes them, restudies and reorganizes them; and out of this process
4. the problem becomes clearly defined. This amounts to saying that a suggested solution emerges....When the suggested response appears, the individual
5. tries it out. If it works the thought cycle is empirically complete; but the scientifically minded person will
6. try the new response in a number of related ways to verify it....

Consequently, a group of sentences was first given in which a certain usage appeared. Care was taken to make the examples as near alike as possible and to provide enough sentences to enable the child to arrive at a logical conclusion. The pupil was directed to study the punctuation in the model sentences and then to express what he had observed in the form of a

1/Billett, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

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general rule of punctuation. He was instructed to write his rule in a space provided on the work sheet. Most of the pupils arrived at the correct conclusion in stating the rule. Of course some of the pupils needed help. Rules for the comma in series were stated thus:

1. "Place a comma to separate words in series and put a comma before the conjunction."
2. "The comma is used to separate words in series."
3. "Always use a comma if there is more than one thing mentioned."

Obviously the composer of the last rule needed assistance, which was promptly given. When the rule was found to be satisfactory, the pupil was allowed to go on to the next section where he was required to apply his rule to a group of sentences.

Finally, the pupil was required to write and punctuate original sentences or, in some cases, sentences from ideas supplied on the work sheet. By this technique of controlled composition, which was suggested by Jenkins,<sup>1/</sup> the pupil had practice in applying the rules to sentences similar in pattern to those of his natural expression.

In each work sheet there were at least twenty-five

---

<sup>1/</sup>See p. 83 of this manuscript.

1871. 1872. 1873. 1874. 1875. 1876. 1877. 1878. 1879. 1880.

1881. 1882. 1883. 1884. 1885. 1886. 1887. 1888. 1889. 1890.

1891. 1892. 1893. 1894. 1895. 1896. 1897. 1898. 1899. 1900.

1901. 1902. 1903. 1904. 1905. 1906. 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910.

1911. 1912. 1913. 1914. 1915. 1916. 1917. 1918. 1919. 1920.

1921. 1922. 1923. 1924. 1925. 1926. 1927. 1928. 1929. 1930.

1931. 1932. 1933. 1934. 1935. 1936. 1937. 1938. 1939. 1940.

1941. 1942. 1943. 1944. 1945. 1946. 1947. 1948. 1949. 1950.

1951. 1952. 1953. 1954. 1955. 1956. 1957. 1958. 1959. 1960.

1961. 1962. 1963. 1964. 1965. 1966. 1967. 1968. 1969. 1970.

1971. 1972. 1973. 1974. 1975. 1976. 1977. 1978. 1979. 1980.

1981. 1982. 1983. 1984. 1985. 1986. 1987. 1988. 1989. 1990.

1991. 1992. 1993. 1994. 1995. 1996. 1997. 1998. 1999. 2000.

2001. 2002. 2003. 2004. 2005. 2006. 2007. 2008. 2009. 2010.

2011. 2012. 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. 2017. 2018. 2019. 2020.

2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025. 2026. 2027. 2028. 2029. 2030.

2031. 2032. 2033. 2034. 2035. 2036. 2037. 2038. 2039. 2040.

2041. 2042. 2043. 2044. 2045. 2046. 2047. 2048. 2049. 2050.

2051. 2052. 2053. 2054. 2055. 2056. 2057. 2058. 2059. 2060.

2061. 2062. 2063. 2064. 2065. 2066. 2067. 2068. 2069. 2070.

2071. 2072. 2073. 2074. 2075. 2076. 2077. 2078. 2079. 2080.

2081. 2082. 2083. 2084. 2085. 2086. 2087. 2088. 2089. 2090.

2091. 2092. 2093. 2094. 2095. 2096. 2097. 2098. 2099. 2100.

2101. 2102. 2103. 2104. 2105. 2106. 2107. 2108. 2109. 2110.

2111. 2112. 2113. 2114. 2115. 2116. 2117. 2118. 2119. 2120.

2121. 2122. 2123. 2124. 2125. 2126. 2127. 2128. 2129. 2130.

2131. 2132. 2133. 2134. 2135. 2136. 2137. 2138. 2139. 2140.

2141. 2142. 2143. 2144. 2145. 2146. 2147. 2148. 2149. 2150.



sentences in which the rule was employed. Thus a greater amount of illustrative and practice material was afforded than is in the usual textbook.

Throughout the work sheets the concept of sense, or meaning, was stressed, and an attempt was made to show why the usages exist. Yet grammar was not overlooked. The writer believes that certain grammar concepts are necessary to the understanding of punctuation as a means of expressing thought. The pupil must know what a sentence is if he is to understand end punctuation and avoid the comma blunder (the comma placed incorrectly between two main clauses not joined by a conjunction). He must be familiar with the parts of speech and the parts of a sentence in order to arrive at certain rules and state them in adequate words. An examination of the sample practice sheets will make this clear to the reader.

Testing the individual and the group.-- When the pupil had completed work on the practice sheet, he took it to the instructor for correction. If there was evidence that he understood the principle involved and had correctly applied it, he was given a test similar in form to the exercises on the practice sheet. If the results were satisfactory, he was given a practice sheet for the next punctuation goal on his chart.

If the pupil had not done the exercises correctly, or if the results of the test were unsatisfactory, he was given new practice material on the same usage and instructed to work



on that.

As time went on, more compositions were assigned. Often in these papers errors appeared that had not been committed before. They in turn were added to the Goal Sheet. All written work was examined to discover whether the usages on which the pupil had been drilling were correct or not. Although the writer's experiment was not carried out over a long enough period of time to arrive at definite conclusions concerning the lasting effectiveness of the method, she can report that there was an appreciable improvement in punctuation skills as the work progressed. It would seem that such an organization would result in more nearly approaching our goals than would a method which endeavored to teach all marks of punctuation at each grade level and expected perfection of all pupils at the same time.

Occasionally the class was called together for group testing in the form of dictation exercises, proof-reading, and exercises modelled after those on the work sheet.

Preparation of work sheets.-- The preparation of the work sheets requires a great deal of time and thought on the part of the instructor. When the original sheets have been completed, however, they become a part of the classroom equipment and can be filed for future use. Mimeographed copies can be made each year to meet the demands of the classes. If further



practice materials are needed, work books and sentence booklets may be used. The most effective exercises to use in connection with this proposed method are those organized so as to provide many opportunities to apply the same rule; therefore supplementary material should be collected with that thought in mind.

Merits of the work sheets.-- In summarizing the merits of the work sheets we arrive at certain conclusions:

1. They supply many examples of correct usage.
2. They allow for pupil participation in stating a rule.
3. They cultivate reasoning.
4. They reveal the reason for the usage.
5. They combine the grammar concept and the sense concept.
6. They set up a problem-solving situation.
7. They contain exercises patterned after the child's own expression.
8. They provide many opportunities for applying the rule.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is not only a scientific one, but also a philosophical one. The scientific aspect of the problem is concerned with the question of how life arose from non-life. The philosophical aspect is concerned with the question of whether life is a necessary part of the universe or whether it is a mere accident.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various theories of the origin of life. It is shown that there are three main theories: the theory of spontaneous generation, the theory of biogenesis, and the theory of abiogenesis. Each of these theories is discussed in detail, and the evidence for and against each is presented.

The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the evidence for the origin of life. It is shown that there is a great deal of evidence in favor of the theory of abiogenesis. This evidence includes the discovery of fossilized microorganisms, the discovery of the structure of DNA, and the discovery of the chemical pathways that lead to the formation of life.

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the implications of the origin of life. It is shown that the origin of life has important implications for our understanding of the universe. It is also shown that the origin of life has important implications for our understanding of ourselves.

The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the future of the study of the origin of life. It is shown that there is still a great deal to be learned about the origin of life. It is also shown that there are many new techniques that can be used to study the origin of life.

The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the conclusion. It is shown that the origin of life is a complex problem that requires further study. It is also shown that the origin of life is a problem that is of great importance to us.

The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the bibliography. It is shown that there are many books and articles that are relevant to the study of the origin of life. It is also shown that there are many new books and articles that have been published recently.

The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the index. It is shown that there are many topics that are covered in the paper. It is also shown that there are many new topics that have been added to the index.

The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the appendix. It is shown that there are many tables and figures that are included in the paper. It is also shown that there are many new tables and figures that have been added to the appendix.

The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the conclusion. It is shown that the origin of life is a complex problem that requires further study. It is also shown that the origin of life is a problem that is of great importance to us.

## Specimen Practice Exercises

## Punctuation I

A. Study each of the following sentences carefully:

1. Jody Baxter longed for a pet, yet his mother refused to let him have one.
2. The little boy often visited Fodderwing, and then he played with the animals to his heart's content.
3. Several foxes robbed the cornfield at night, so Penny Boxter decided to hunt them.
4. The Forresters were rough men, but they treated their weak little brother with great tenderness.
5. One day Buck found a bee tree in the woods, and that night he took Jody to get the wild honey.
6. Penny Baxter had had a hard life, yet he remained good-natured.
7. Jody's father was poisoned by the bite of a rattlesnake, so the Forresters sent for the doctor.
8. Jody would chop wood for the fire, or he would hoe the sweet potatoes.
9. Jody had no brothers, nor had he a pet.

B. Each of the above sentences is built on the same sentence pattern. How many independent clauses can you find in each sentence? Answer.....

Underline each simple subject once and each main verb twice.

What kind of sentence is each? Answer.....

In each sentence you will find a conjunction between the independent clauses. List the conjunctions here.

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 1..... | 6..... |
| 2..... | 7..... |





- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 3..... | 8..... |
| 4..... | 9..... |
| 5..... |        |

What mark of punctuation do you see before each conjunction? Answer.....

Write a rule which will tell how to punctuate such sentences as these.

Rule:.....  
 .....

C. Apply the rule you have just written to each of the following sentences:

1. The Baxters had no well so Penny carried water from a sink hole.
2. Jody secretly saved part of his own meal and after supper he fed it to Flag.
3. Mrs. Baxter had a sharp tongue yet she was not deliberately unkind.
4. Jody could play by himself or he could play with Fodder-wing.
5. Penny carried the wooden buckets to the trough and there he filled them with water.
6. The garden yielded vegetables for the little family and the forest gave them wild game.
7. Mrs. Baxter did not like the Forresters nor did she like Grandma Hutto.
8. The Forresters attacked Oliver Hutto so Penny went to his rescue.
9. The Forresters buried Fodder-wing on the hillside and Penny Baxter prayed for the soul of the little boy.
10. Jody loved his coonskin knapsack yet he gladly gave it to the doctor.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

8. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

9. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

10. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

11. The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

12. The twelfth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

13. The thirteenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

14. The fourteenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

15. The fifteenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

D. Using the simple sentences below, write correctly punctuated compound sentences. Use the conjunction which seems to you to make the best sense.

1. Jody had no brothers.  
He was often lonesome.
2. Old Slewfoot was a large bear.  
Old Julia was a dog.
3. Jody did not like Eulalie.  
He did not like his father to tease him about her.
4. Mrs. Baxter often spoke sharply to Jody.  
She really loved her son very much.
5. Ma Forrester had no daughters to help her.  
Her sons washed the dishes.

E. Now write five sentences of your own to prove that you can write and punctuate a compound sentence correctly. Check each clause to be sure it has a subject and a main verb. Use as many different conjunctions as you can.

### Series

A. Study each of the following sentences carefully.

In each one the same use of the comma is illustrated.

1. Tom, Arthur, and Bill gathered wood for the outdoor fireplace.
2. In three neat piles they placed twigs, larger kindling, and logs.
3. Alice, Martha, Jane, and Dorothy unpacked the picnic baskets and prepared the food.
4. Over the glowing coals they planned to cook steak, coffee, and corn.
5. From the branches overhead squirrels, birds, and chipmunks looked down with friendly curiosity.
6. Bill caught a fish, cleaned it, and cooked it on the end of a forked stick.



- B. In each sentence above you will find words in series. That is, three words or more that go together to make up a part of the sentence, such as the subject, the predicate, or the direct object.

What word do you find in each sentence between the last two words in series? Answer.....

What part of speech is this word? Answer.....

Study the punctuation of the sentences. Write a rule which will tell how to punctuate words in series.

Rule:

- C. Some writers omit the comma before the conjunction which joins the last two items of a series. At times this practice misleads the reader. Study the following sentences, and see whether you can detect any difference in meaning as a result of the omission of the comma.

1. We ordered tea, cakes, toast, and jam.
2. We ordered tea, cakes, toast and jam.
3. We ordered tea, toast, cakes and jam.

Although the meaning of sentence 2 is clear, some people object to the omission of the comma in sentence 3. What reason can you see for their objection?

Answer:

As a general rule it is safest for you to use the comma before the conjunction.

- D. Punctuate the following sentences according to the rule you have written above in B.
1. Peter John and Edward spent the summer at Boy Scout Camp.
  2. Each evening around the campfire the boys would sing tell stories and perform stunts.
  3. Afternoons were spent swimming rowing or paddling.





4. In the Nature House were specimens of wild flowers insects and butterflies.
5. With the help of his craft counselor John made a bracelet a lanyard and a letter opener to take home.
6. Peter earned the Junior Life-Saving Badge the Nature Badge and the Health Badge while he was at camp.

E. Write a complete sentence as answer to the following.

1. Name three foreign languages that are taught in high school.  
Answer:

2. What three radio programs do you like best?  
Answer:

3. Name four books that you have read since you entered high school.  
Answer:

4. Name three organizations or clubs for high school boys or girls.  
Answer:

5. Name four pupils that are members of the traffic squad.  
Answer:

F. Just as we find words in series we also find phrases and clauses in series. They are punctuated exactly as words in series are.

Study these sentences.

1. Over the hill, across the bridge, and into the barnyard come the flock of sheep.
2. Jimmy is now a corporal, Bob is a sergeant, and Tom is a first lieutenant.



3. You may go swimming if you have finished your home-work, if you have filled the woodbox, and if you have fed the chickens.
  4. We enjoyed diving from the highest springboard, swimming under water, and playing water polo.
  5. To enjoy outdoor life, to study the ways of nature, and to learn how to get along with other boys were the aims set for the young camper.
  6. The young soldier was wearied by months of fighting, exhausted by the recent train trip, yet overjoyed at the thought of coming home.
- G. You have noticed that the above sentences contain either phrases or clauses in series. On the space below write phrase if the sentence contains phrases in series; write clause if it contains clauses in series.
- |    |    |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |
- H. From your reading book, the newspaper, or a magazine copy three sentences to illustrate words in series, and three to illustrate clauses in series. See whether you can find sentences with the comma left out before the conjunction. If you can find such sentences, justify the omission of the comma or state a good reason why you would insert a comma.

### Punctuating Mental Detours

#### 1.

Suppose we were driving from Boston to Providence on Route 1. Along the way we see an inviting country road. Since we are in no hurry to get to Providence, we turn off onto the side road and follow it past farmland, meadow, and pasture. We see many interesting things as we follow the dirt road in its winding, but finally we arrive at Route 1 once more and continue on that highway. Although it was not necessary to take the pleasant side trip to arrive at our destination, we have all enjoyed the additional experience.



Many sentences are built with interesting side trips. These mental detours take us away from the main thought of the sentence, tell us something of interest, and then return us to the main thought.

Sometimes the side trip comes at the very beginning of the sentence, just as we might have a sight-seeing tour of Boston before leaving for Providence. Sometimes the detour comes at the end. That could be compared to a sight-seeing trip after we arrive in Providence. The main idea for us to remember is that these little side trips are unnecessary to our main plan: to get from Boston to Providence, or to express clearly an idea for our reader.

I. Study each of the following sentences carefully. See whether you can find the mental detour in each one. Underline it. Remember, if you remove the detour from the sentence the main thought is still clear and the meaning of the sentence is by no means changed.

1. The storm, however, continued far into the night.
2. Thomas, unlike his brother, has a very keen sense of humor.
3. Mary, on the other hand, never knows where her books are.
4. Entering the kitchen, mother put her packages down on the table.
5. Our history teacher, trying to arouse our interest in current events, suggested that we form a Current Events Club.
6. At the fair we met Senator George, who is interested in raising poultry.
7. Let's go to the Mansion Inn, where we can enjoy winter sports.
8. This little gold locket, in which we found a picture of grandmother, is at least one hundred years old.
9. Sunning himself in the park, the old gentlemen dreamed of days gone by.
10. We accepted Billy's apology, knowing full well he would commit the same blunder again.
11. Mary Jane Carew, who wrote the prize essay, will enter Radcliffe in September.



12. The speaker of the evening will be Jonathan Carver, who has recently returned from the European front.

## II.

1. Often the beginning and end of a real detour are marked with signs.

What signs mark the mental detours in the above sentences?

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write a definition which will clearly explain what is meant by a "mental detour."

Definition:

3. Now write a rule, based on your observation of the fourteen sample sentences, which will tell how to punctuate a mental detour:

Rule:

## III. Punctuate the following sentences according to the rule you have just formed:

1. The U. S. S. Massachusetts which was built at the Fore River Shipyard has crossed the Atlantic many times.
2. Although we waited nearly an hour we did not see the famous actress.
3. The players however were prepared to meet their strong opponents.
4. Have you ever read The Yearling the story of Jody Baxter and his fawn?
5. Realizing that the child was on the verge of hysterics we put him under the nurse's care.
6. The snow storm put an end to our favorite sport skating of the river.
7. The amaryllis which is easily grown by most amateurs produces large flowers.
8. Running to catch the ball the short-stop fell and injured his arm.





9. Barnum the owner of the American Museum introduced Tom Thumb to the King of England.
  10. Have you ever been to the White Mountains the scene of Hawthorne's story.
  11. Into the cupboard scampered the little mouse for he was as frightened as I.
  12. Tom has a way with the ladies if we can believe all he says.
  13. Into the midst of the crowd strode a fireman not a policeman.
  14. After a few years the child will without doubt be able to walk alone.
  15. Mary it seemed had forgotten her appointment.
- IV. Using the following material write sentences containing mental detours, and punctuate them correctly. Use all kinds of detours: single words, phrases, and clauses.

EXAMPLE:

- a. John Jones is captain of the football team.
- b. John Jones plays left end.

ANSWER: John Jones, the captain of the football team, plays left end, or, John Jones, who is captain of the football team, plays left end.

1. a. Mary was looking out of the window.  
b. Mary saw the taxi stop in front of the house.
2. a. Kitty Brown has won two spelling contests.  
b. Kitty is to compete in the Herald-Traveler Spelling Bee Finals.
3. a. The novel tells about the French Revolution.  
b. Charles Dickens wrote the novel.  
c. The name of the novel is A Tale of Two Cities.
4. a. Father has determined to punish the puppy.  
b. The puppy chewed father's slippers.
5. a. Mr. Bonney is the headmaster of Andrews Academy.  
b. Mr. Bonney presented the diplomas to the graduates.



6. a. The street car was approaching the intersection.  
b. The street car crashed into a stalled automobile.
7. a. Mother turned off all the electric lights.  
b. She lit the Christmas candles.
8. a. The indignant customer drew herself up to her full height.  
b. She glared at the unfortunate salesgirl.
- V. Using the following items as mental detours write a sentence for each. Check each sentence to see whether you have made the item a detour, an interesting side trip.
  1. however
  2. by the way
  3. holding fast to the rail
  4. whom we all love dearly
  5. who had never before seen salt water
  6. of course
  7. as far as we know
  8. whose last novel was extremely popular
  9. for the snow was extremely heavy and wet
  10. coming unexpectedly to a barbed-wire fence
  11. the owner of the property
  12. an extremely boring young woman



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